

The
Maid He Married
By
Harriet Prescott Spofford



BLUE CLOTH BOOKS





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BLUE CLOTH BOOKS



OLIVER IVERSON

His adventures during four days
and nights in the City of New
York in April of the year 1890
by Ann Devoore

A LITTLE LEGACY AND OTHER STORIES

by Mrs. L. B. Walford

THE MAID HE MARRIED

by Harriet Prescott Spofford

A JUNE ROMANCE

by Norman Gale

A HEAVEN-KISSING HILL

by Julia Magruder



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The lady that sings,"

The Maid He Married

BY

Harriet Prescott Spofford



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The Maid He Married



I

One world is as large as another to those that are in it, and events of the smallest nature, if they are close enough to the eye, can shut off the great sun himself.

It was not, however, by any means a small event that had made a stir in Mrs. Grey's family. It was one with far-reaching results. For Josephine's Aunt Josephine had committed the inconceivable folly of marrying again. Inconceivable because, as Mrs. Grey said, a woman past forty could not expect and need not pretend love, especially for a person she did not know six weeks ago; and she had already sufficient income for the narrow village life, and was not

driven to the crime, as her sister phrased it, through want.

But Josephine's aunt did not look at the affair at all in that light. She had been a good wife to the shop-keeping deacon, who, if he filled her small early ideal, had, on the whole, been a disappointment to her capacity for growth. She had saved and spared with him for years, years in which, however, she had always pitched her housekeeping on a somewhat higher key than that of any one else in the place; where Dr. Madden, and the minister had always found her companionable. But, nevertheless, she was dissatisfied. She had desired something beyond this, a different life; one, at any rate, that could better meet her instinct for the beautiful, her fancy for luxury. The monotony of the years, the poverty of thought and of occurrence were stupefying. She felt herself sinking to the level of an animal

existence. She saved herself, she imagined, by letting the larger life of the world of wealth and state control her thoughts.

She had had time to read much of this great world, and she knew how one should conduct one's self in it, if one were only there. And now, having taken the bold step of going to a not very distant town to collect a small debt, she had found herself in the house with a something more than middle-aged gentleman of leisure, whose carriage had broken down while he was driving through the hills with a party, the others of the party having gone on and left him with his servant, and a fracture of the ankle, and a very sore and angry spirit.

That Frances had not waited for him was a source of indignant feeling with Mr. Applegate; that she could have been so indifferent to his pain and his loneliness out-

raged him. It is true that Daniel was of far more service. But it was the duty of Frances. Yet, of course, it was not to be expected that she would leave a company where an English earl made one, for the sake of any old father. Mr. Applegate revised his politics on the spot, and if there had been a faction with a platform proposing the abolition of English earls, he would have voted its straight ticket. As he could not do that, he did the next best thing, and made Daniel's life a burden to him, although previously he had felt it greatly to Daniel's credit that he was an Englishman.

Straightway, when Josephine's aunt had taken in the situation, she saw her opportunity. She delayed in the place beyond her first intention. She showed a kindly sympathy in a gentle, womanly way that was very acceptable. She amused Mr. Applegate with a gift of mimicry she

had. She told him stories. She let him tell stories to her. She flattered him quietly, and more by hint than by token. She read to him. She commented on the daily news in a rather large-minded fashion. She made him feel awake and alive and pleased with himself—pleased, too, with a certain piquancy in her rustic air, and her still rather remarkable beauty. She brought him wild flowers from her rambles, and knew things about them unknown to him. And when he made a wry face at his tisanes and potages, she begged to be allowed to oversee the preparation of certain toothsome messes after her own recipes. In fact, she rendered herself so agreeable, prolonging her own stay as if she were there only for the mountain air, that he asked himself seriously why he should not secure such a pleasant, cheerful, wholesome, capable companion for the remainder of his rather lonely

days, pestered out of his life as he was by Frances and Laura. It is true that Frances and Laura were married, and off his hands ostensibly; but, for all that, they had not relinquished their old rule, and their father frequently had occasion, remembering his youthful studies in physics, to recognize that, so far as the government of him and his house was concerned, what was lost in velocity was gained in force by them through the possibilities of their marriages. And presently he asked Josephine's aunt the same question that he had asked himself, pressing his suit as she retired from it, and although finally carrying the day, yet feeling that he did so with difficulty.

"It is not," said Mr. Applegate, "as if I were a poor man. My children will have no right to object to anything I do. There is plenty for all. Fortune has been kind to

me—fortune, and my father, and my grandfather, and the stock market. I am a very rich man, you know—”

“You are not rich enough to buy me,” said Josephine’s aunt.

“By Heaven!” said Mr. Applegate. “It takes a woman to twist a man’s meaning! I said nothing of the sort! Do you suppose—”

“I suppose,” she said, laying her soft, cool hand on his, “that you will never get well if you excite yourself in this way.”

“*You* excite me! I beg you to share my home, my fortune; I offer you settlements, and you say—”

“No, indeed, I don’t say—” She interrupted him, smiling.

“That is the truth,” he muttered. “You don’t say!” And then she brought him a light for his cigar.

“I am an old man,” said Mr. Applegate, presently, looking at the end of his cigar a little sadly. “I mean, I—I am getting to be an old

man. My daughters— Well, love goes down, not up, you know. Not that I complain. They are good girls, well established. But I confess I have thought what home might be in these coming days if a woman, a cheery, happy woman, pleasant to the eye, whose voice was music, whose touch was like velvet, as yours is—”

“Ah, yes,” she sighed. “It is not natural. It is so sad to be alone. I, too, have had dreams—dreams of a home,” she said, resting her handsome head on her shapely hand, as if looking into the heart of the dreams, “where I was the sunshine—”

“Yes, the sunshine,” said Mr. Applegate.

And neither of the reprobates remembered just then their youth.

“It is absurd,” said Josephine’s aunt. “At my age.”

“I do not consider it absurd at my age,” said Mr. Applegate.

“With all the world laughing,” said she.

“Let those laugh that win,” said he.

And Mr. Applegate won. And he called in the clergyman, and married her upon the spot; a little afraid of Daniel, but warmed by that functionary’s apparent approval, and possibly the least in the world gratified by the thought that Frances would rue the day when she drove on and left him alone. He was obliged for some weeks yet to remain where he was, weeks in which he found himself very well pleased with his quite debonair and delightful wife, going abroad with her afterwards for a rather extended European tour, where, taking hold of the new life with all the grace and strength that might have belonged to her youth, she made fine friends, managed to have herself presented at more than one court,

and saw and absorbed much that stood her in good stead when they returned and she was installed among the lares and penates of her husband's home.

Triumphant and happy as she was in many ways, yet Mrs. Applegate did not find that the roses strewing her path were without thorns. Her husband's people did not receive her with open arms, so to say. Frances had had to take her family out of her father's house, where she had lived since her marriage, in order that Mrs. Applegate should come into it; and she was so decidedly inimical as to make it unpleasant; and none of the other gentle-mannered and distant individuals gave her much chance of conquering them with kindness, as she had meant to do. But as Mr. Applegate announced with emphasis that those who did not like his behavior could drop his acquaintance, and as few, in

view of future financial possibilities, wished to follow that course, there was an adaptation to circumstances with sufficient outward show to escape his criticism. But Mrs. Applegate had a certain comfort in knowing that it was not those old days of stiletto and goblet, when the grasp might press the spring of Borgian rings with unpleasant results upon the unwelcome hand. Not that any of these good people would have done such a thing for the world and all the worlds; but their tears, had some one else done it, were problematical.

Although it was not to be open war, still this sort of armed neutrality was not what a social, cheerful person like Mrs. Applegate coveted. And, moreover, she had to confess, Mr. Applegate himself was not all that fancy had painted him when it had seemed worth while to make herself so invaluable to him in the

mountain cottage, where the vast purple masses stood like a wall between them and the world and its carping. If, indeed, she had not painted anything very godlike, yet she had hardly dreamed he could be so abrupt, so lordly, so changeable. For what Mr. Applegate wanted, he wanted now; he stormed on occasion, and exploded in strong language frequently. Sometimes he hated his people; but it was not safe to presume on that, for just as often he loved them. Sometimes his sons-in-law were reckless spendthrifts who should not have a dollar of his money to throw away; and sometimes they developed such a love of money, in his view, that he was resolved his property should never be turned to their miserly uses. He bemoaned the absence of young life in the house, threatened to adopt a son or a daughter; and always seemed to be capable of doing something rash,

whether it were to bury himself in the depths of the country or to go up in the first balloon coming handy. Perhaps she had expected more flattery than she received; hardly more caresses; but she certainly had supposed that wealth meant the ability to spend money; and although in the beginning she had intended to give her little income to her disapproving sister Maria, struggling with her growing family, she had found herself obliged to reserve it for her own use, in order that she might have more independence. Everything was very fine in the house, which was little less than a palace; and her husband had provided for her with such liberal provision as became his wife. But he required every month a strict rendering of account. It was his habit; and as he had grown older and a little testy with the gout, all his habits asserted themselves more sharply.

Still, that was only vexatious. And in the meantime there were all the luxuries that used to be dear to her imagination, and now were dear to her soul—the spacious house and its sumptuous belongings; the rich silks and velvets, furs and jewels, that made her wonder if it were really she wearing them; the silent and obsequious servants; the carriages and horses; and all the equipage of wealth. And if the family were distant, so was not the world of her husband's acquaintance; Mrs. Applegate was made welcome in society, to whose methods and manners she accommodated herself in a way that won her husband's complete admiration. And she was always more fortified than otherwise by the fact that Daniel was her friend.

Wise in her day and generation, too, Mrs. Applegate was not content now with any subordinate personal

position. Her new acquaintances presently found her at the front in various of their concerns. The Hospital for Forsaken Babies had her regularly appointed mornings; the Assembled Alms hardly conducted a meeting without her; and her carriage was as often seen before the door of the Burden Bearing Home, and that of the Middle Aged Ladies' Rest as at those of the great entertainers. She had private instruction, that she might lead the applause intelligently at the Symphonies. She became the patron of a young violinist and an old artist who dangled in her train. She had a pew at the Incarnation and made Mr. Applegate occupy it with her, and embroidered for the altar a jeweled cloth too splendid for any but splendid occasion. She gave a collection of casts from the antique to the neighboring Woman's College, and was the *grande dame* of the

occasion on its first public holiday. She persuaded her husband to endow a scholarship in the University, and she was much more the star at the next Commencement than any of the young orators there. Her theatricals, and her very select and secluded nights after the play, when some great dancers gave pavanes and corantos in a wonderful way to wonderful slow music, were full of ideas; and she was the commanding force of certain phantasmagoric festivals intended to promote the love of art. "What Mrs. Applegate says, goes," her husband declared; and he felt himself pleased with her.

But when the novelty had dulled, it remained that she was rather a solitary woman. She had hardly more than a friendly regard for her husband; and when he was crusty with his lame leg, or tyrannical with the servants, or accurate about her money matters, she had hardly that.

The acquaintances she had were glad to come to her regal dinners, to drop in for five-o'clock tea and gossip, to join her theater parties. But, interested in the people they had always known, not one among them would have received her confidences with sympathy had she been willing to make them. And then, too, there was none of the satisfaction that might be hers had any of those who had once known the deacon's wife been among these to estimate the apparent triumph of it all. Her sister Maria had thought so ill of her for marrying, and had so plainly said so, that she did not feel like telling Maria that she was right; and, moreover, Maria was not a person to understand her. She herself had read books all her life that Maria had never had time to read. And she had always had a daily city paper. She had made the poor deacon take her, every year, for one or two

short journeys where a day and night in a hotel gave her familiarity with a great deal of splendor for her money, and an evening at the theater had given her hints as to how fine people comported themselves, and had enlarged her point of view. And she and Maria looked at the world quite differently, anyway. And as Maria would not have understood her, and might have remarked that as she had made her bed so she must lie in it, there was no use in telling Maria that, after all, the deacon's widow in the little country town was happier than Mr. Applegate's wife in the great city, with an overflowing share of the great city's splendor. Once, in an access of the inner lonesomeness, she had asked Maria to visit her, in spite of the fact that Maria, good plain woman as she was, with her hard life and her restricted views, had not the appearance which would be of advan-

tage to her among fashionable folk. But Maria had the sense, as she assured herself on reading the letter, to know when she was well off; and she declined the invitation, but told her sister to run up to her whenever she felt as if blood were thicker than water.

One day Mrs. Applegate did so, walking from the station to Maria's door, and noting curiously how small and worn things looked to her, things that once had seemed fine enough. When she went into her sister's house her ample proportions and flowing draperies seemed to fill it; and she felt that she had never realized how low the room was, how narrow; how old were the chintz lounges and chairs, how dull were the frames of her father's and her mother's wooden-looking portraits on the wall! And yet, if she should send up new frames for them, what a contrast they would make

with all the dingy habit of the place! Her flowing skirt with its fur borders, her sables, her plumes, seemed to her perception to fill the room; but to that of her nieces it was as if a goddess in a Worth gown had come among them. And then her sister hurried in, and they fell upon each other's neck, and neither thought whether the one was fine or the other shabby. It was "Josephine dear!" and "Maria darling!" and all the years between were gone, and all the difference in the way of life, and they were girls again together.

But, after all, it was a pleasant room. Although the carpet was old and the chintz was faded, yet all was old and faded together; an English ivy latticed the east window and met the long stem of a wax-plant, whose fragrant clusters shed over the place their faint, delicious breath, and the sun sifted in a radiant mass

of color through the geraniums and carnations in the south window, which were Josephine's care and pride. The dark old bookcase, the dim portraits, the quaint looking-glass, the valanced rocking-chair, the ancient low-boy, gave the place a look of rather refined comfort. For a moment Mrs. Applegate longed to throw off the whole Worth business, and sit down in one of Maria's wrappers and feel at home, as she had never felt since she left her little brown house across the way—a pleasant little house with its bay-window and piazza, with its front yard and garden; it had seemed a paradise when she went into it a bride. This pretty Josephine, her niece, was her very picture, she said to herself, as she looked in the old glad days. A pretty, pretty girl, this Josephine, her namesake, with her soft hair, thick at its parting, in a great knot behind,

and like a gold cloud over the white forehead. Why, what an extraordinarily pretty girl she was! What eyes those were—great lucent hazel eyes, trusting eyes, not quite so dark, you saw, when they glanced up appealingly, as the brows and lashes made them look. The lines of the straight nose and its lightly curving nostrils, of the cheek melting into the chin where the dimple continued the cleft of the curling upper lip above the full red lower one—what delicacy there was in those lines as she smiled, as she laughed; what a sweet, half-melancholy thing was the wistful look of her face in repose! How like tiny pale pink shells were the close-set ears! Tall for her years;—how old was she? She must be somewhere about twenty—sweet and twenty. Well, tall enough; and the shape—supple, lithe, well-rounded perfection. A small hand, too; rings

would look well on it;—to be sure, she had done no work except her school-teaching. A pretty foot, if it were well shod.

All this had swept through Mrs. Applegate's mind in the time that she was kissing her niece, holding her off, and kissing her again. Here was a find, here was a treasure, she said to herself; but she did not say it to any one else. "Oh, she is very fit!" And while the young girl, filled with a sense of undreamed wealth in the touch of the thick furs, the delicate gloves, in the waft of violet fragrance among the chiffons, in the soft pressure of the cool rich cheek, admired and loved her aunt upon the spot, the younger ones looked with speechless awe at this beautiful being, this fine lady, who had done something, they had heard, something of which their mother disapproved, something which their mother now so evidently forgave

that it could not be anything very untoward.

But the pretty Josephine understood very well what her aunt had done. She had married a rich man for whom she did not particularly care; but then, it was not to be supposed that as a rule people did particularly care when they were near fifty; and, in fact, dim in interior consciousness lay the belief that when people were near fifty they were little more than figure-heads, anyway, to fill the scene for those that were not twenty. She had become the mistress of a splendid house, such as Josephine had read of in forbidden novels; she had horses and carriages; she had money to spend, and nothing to do; and she wore Russian sables—and Josephine felt like blowing into those sables to see how deep and soft and silkily the fur parted. But she did nothing of the kind of course. No one knew

better than Josephine how to behave —was she not a little school-ma'am? And she had a native instinct of good manners, a tuneful voice, a gentle movement, an innocent quality, and as much tact as belongs righteously to any young girl. She took the furs from her aunt and carried them off; and the other girls, used to Josephine's ways, discreetly withdrew with her, and left their mother and aunt together, while they spread a luncheon table, as their aunt had said her visit was but for an hour or two, with the best they had and in the best way they knew.

It pleased Mrs. Applegate to see the natural aptitude for fine things and polite ways that Josephine evidently possessed. The snowy cloth and the simple table ornaments, the flowers hastily cut in the window, the appetizing dish, the daintily dressed salad, all so prettily served

on what was left of the china that she remembered herself when a child,—Mrs. Applegate appreciated it. She went soon afterwards; but she left behind her a fund of interest and gossip for many a day thereafter; and she had given Josephine such a careful, searching measurement with her well-trained eyes that Josephine was not exactly surprised when, a week or so afterwards, a big box came to her, and in it was a winter suit of dark green cloth edged with seal, a deep seal cape, and a hat whose dark green plumes waving round her face made her look as lovely as any picture ever painted.

At least her mother thought so, gazing at her with a look of some alarm over the possibilities that struck her at the moment; and Will Marley thought so, too, without an alarm or a misgiving of any sort. Why should he have a misgiving? Had it not been so long understood

between Josephine and himself that they belonged to each other—since his early days at the Medical School, indeed—that it was now like one of the facts of the universe, no more to be changed than the rising and the setting of the sun—they who had walked together, talked together, grown together, sat on the doorstep together with the rose over the lattice making the night sweet about them, silent with that fullness of joy which may not say a word lest some of the happiness spill over and be lost?

Not that this blissful condition had been reached without struggle. The young medical student who was one day to take old Dr. Madden's place, was not an unimportant person in the small community, and this mother had smiled on him, and that aunt had bade him to tea, and that father had asked his advice and consulted him as to the real value of a

horse-chestnut or a small potato carried in the pocket for rheumatism. Nor they alone; but Mary Madden had repeated her father's invitation to use his books when he would, and the skeleton hanging in the study there; and Julia Lands had knit him a pair of silk stockings with her own fingers, which, owing to their usually rough condition, had caught so badly in the silk as to make the result a very personal memento; and Amelie Browne had opened a dispute with him and had written him little notes on pink paper with a spray of roses in the corner, winding them up with a French phrase, and sealing them with wax, which, in the hateful way wax has in the hands of a novice, blotched itself far outside the seal—the seal of a heart and arrow, that in the dark red wax had a frightfully realistic suggestion for the young surgeon. And even Miss Pearson,

the Academy preceptress, who it was well known could speak Patagonian, had there been any one to understand her, had said that it gave her more pleasure to talk with Will Marley than with any one but the minister. She talked with him in English, however.

II

It might have turned the head of any one else, this popularity and kind attention; but Will Marley's head was a very level one. In fact, when he accepted Mary Madden's invitation, and turned over the doctor's books, finding them rather out of date, he only thought how good-natured she was to add her invitation to her father's, and wondered, very privately, and as it were in the dark, how a girl could be so stupid who had the advantages of those books and that skeleton. As for Julia's knitting, the articles were so much too small that he was sure she had knit them for her young brother, and made a misfit, and given them to himself only to prevent waste;

and disliking such obligation, he had wagered a half-dozen balls of silk with her on a dead certainty, and lost them. And neither Amelie Browne's notes nor any of the significant flutterings of the rest of the girls in their totality, were of any more meaning or worth to him than the floating of motes in the sunbeam —the great sunbeam of his passion for Josephine.

And Josephine, going and coming from her school with the children hanging about her, had seemed at first fine, remote, unapproachable. He wondered where his eyes had been that he had not seen how fair she was years ago, forgetting that probably years ago she had not been so fair, and that he had been more occupied with baseball and football than with any girl's beauty, were she as fair as Fair Rosamond. But from the moment the gleam of that soft, sweet face of hers first

touched him, the world, he felt, would be a blank to him if Josephine did not smile on him, and on him alone of all the world of men.

It was in the meeting-house that fate thus overtook him. He had gone to church that first Sunday of the vacation, and had heard a voice singing the solo of the hymn, during which the people were accustomed to keep their seats. He had turned quickly for a glimpse of the face, and all the rest of the service—the prayer, the reading, the sermon—he heard that voice go on fluting,

“As when the weary traveler gains
The height of some commanding hill,
His heart revives if o'er the plains
He sees his home, though distant still.”

But when the last hymn was to be sung, and the congregation stood up and turned, facing the singing seats, and there, beneath the brim of the little white chip hat with its pink

roses and black velvet bows, he saw the face for more than a glimpse, it seemed to him that nothing but the hymn which she was singing expressed the beauty of it,

“By cool Siloam’s shady rill
How fair the lily grows,
How sweet the breath beneath the hill
Of Sharon’s dewy rose!”

- Could it be possible that this was Josephine Grey—little Josephine?

Nothing is of much use in this world if courage does not go with it. Will Marley called his courage to the front, and on the strength of old acquaintance in pinafors, accosted this young woman when they had both reached the vestibule. And he was none the less charmed with her for her half-frightened air, like that of a startled fawn, the head held high, the quick averted glance, the rising color. And directly a flock of the children that she taught on

week-days gathered around her, claiming her as their own, with delight in her pretty Sunday trim; and although Will walked home beside her, it was with the perpetual interruption of this fluttering crew, one demanding her left hand, and another pushing in between them to get her right one, and a third skipping backward before them, and stumbling and falling, and having to be picked up and brushed off and soothed, so that by the time she reached her gate, Will, in desperate mood, declared that he wished there wasn't a child in the world.

"Then what should I do?" asked the little school-teacher, looking up archly, "without a hat to my head," adjusting the ribbons the last child had set awry, "or a shoe to my foot," and she thrust out the prettiest little foot before she thought, and drew it back again as quickly, and laughed and blushed,

and went in and left him standing in the street, feeling in the first moment as if something before unseen by mortal had but just passed by, and in the next as if he were a gaping fool.

That did not hinder Will's returning in the twilight to go to evening meeting with her. But her mother and the younger girls were with them also, and Will found it useless to try for the place beside her. Now Ellie's shoe was untied, and Josephine had to stoop and tie it for her, and she took the place then on the other side of her mother; or else Agnes came between them with a persistence that demanded punishment—all the more punishment that it did not seem to trouble Josephine; or else both Ellie and Agnes insisted on taking their sister's hand. And it was no better coming home; for that great lout of a Rob Campbell stepped boldly up before him and

asked to see her home, and that was the end of it. Will had some consolation in thinking of Ellie and Agnes; but that was nipped in the bud when Mrs. Grey took Ellie by one hand and Agnes by the other and trudged off with them; and dark were the imprecations then which he hurled upon the head of the happy and unconscious Rob, who, if he had known of it, would have let him hurl on with pleasure, so long as he himself walked by Josephine's side.

The next day it was no better. Rob, who served in the village variety store, was at the gate on some errand when Will came sauntering down, whipping off the tops of the tall grasses with his stick; and when at evening he nerved himself to call, Rob was there before him, with all the ease of an old acquaintance. It was idle for Will to throw himself on his college-bred dignity; Rob's jokes brought

him out of it with surprising swiftness; and after less than a half-dozen such encounters Rob and Will were peacefully walking home together, and Will was offering to lend Rob his books and help him in his ambitions. "I'd rather have an education than any girl that goes," said Rob, in one of his confidences. And when Will got out his old lesson-books and prepared to give Rob his tutoring, he felt that he had paid a price for Josephine, and she belonged to him by right.

Not so felt Josephine. The air of assumption worn by Master Will was not at all to her mind. And if Will had found it difficult to win a smile before, he now found it impossible. She was like a little wild brier rose, full of color and bloom and perfume and honey, but the sweetbrier grew far up the face of a cliff, and was full of thorns, moreover. Should he make some breathless endeavor, per-

haps he might clutch the rose, perhaps the thorn. Ah, indeed, it was the thorn! And Will returned to his medical professors in a condition by no means favorable to his studies.

But, for all that, Will Marley was not the one, as Rob said, to go back on a promise; and he sent Rob Campbell all the books needed, and wrote him pages of instruction, besides, in a letter sent twice a week, half-maddened by Rob's matter-of-fact replies, in which not the most eager scrutiny could find a word or a thought of Josephine—Rob simply lost now in the dust-cloud of his education.

Yet, as all good actions have their reward, in one shape or in another if not in that expected, so Will's faithfulness to Rob bore very unlooked-for fruit. For, studying early in the morning, at odd moments behind the desk or the counter, and as long as the kerosene lamp held out to burn

at night, Rob had no time to devote to pleasure, and Miss Josephine found herself, for all her pretty face and charming ways, apparently quite set aside. For Rob constituted himself the watch-dog of Will's interests, and it having been understood long ago by other admiring youths that, so far as this little maid was concerned, she was a garden enclosed, few ventured to encroach on what they thought Rob's privileges; and the moment that one more daring than the rest did so, ever so little, the watch-dog showed his teeth, and the trespasser retired, and Miss Josephine was left alone, since Rob did not presume upon his alleged privileges—and very dreary she found it. It was vain for her to put on the rosy head-gear that she had knit herself to go to lecture in—no one joined her on the way; to sing her sweetest in the choir—no one waited for her at the door—no one

but Rob, who stalked along silently beside her, or else talked of sines and cosines, principalities and powers, till she felt she was a fool. She saw from the window the parties go sleighing when the moon was high, for the dance and the supper at the head of the lake; but no one had asked her to go. She had to drop the village sociables, for Rob had no time for them, and there would be no one to come home with her. And she began to get melancholy and moping, to feel her school an oppression, the children a vexation, and to find the days long and dismal, with no sort of pleasure in them to look forward to, except now and then a magazine, a book, a photograph of something, that Will sent by post. And then Agnes and Ellie were so afraid that Josephine was going to die—she was so still, so different from the laughing, dancing Josephine that had been the joy of the

house—that they watched her with a tearful anxiety that made her feel as if she should have to go outdoors and scream.

And one day Will came home on a week's vacation. And he drove to the door in a sleigh, and asked her, rather casually, to be sure, if she would like to go over the hill, as he had an errand there. It was the half-holiday; and the air was clear, the sun bright, the snow crisp, the sky a dazzle of blue; and she was at first a little high and mighty, and then a little resentful, and then a little relenting, and then too greatly tempted—all in a moment—and then she was tucked up in the sleigh and spinning along with a color in her cheek and a light in her eye and a laugh on her lip that made it evident to the rest of the world that Will Marley had won the prize—to the rest of the world, that is, except Will Marley.

But faint heart never won fair lady. And after this Will Marley again put on a bold front and asked her to go to the lecture with him. And how delightful that walk was to him; and how he longed to know if it were a twentieth part as pleasant to her, or if it only meant to her that she was not left out while all the other girls were taken! But although that may really have had a great deal to do with Josephine's pleasure, yet she felt so genial that she even asked him to come in when he brought her home. The little girls were making candy, and clamoring for Josephine to help them pull it; and a merry hour it was before Mrs. Grey took them off to bed, and left him alone with Josephine, a great joy and a great hesitation battling in his heart, and reducing him to sudden silence and early departure. He went home from church with her when Sunday came; and he called on

Monday morning, before she went to school, to bring her a paper novel he had spoken of, and strolled along with her, to the great and mysterious satisfaction of the school-children, who kept her cheeks the color of carnations all the forenoon. And when school was over on Tuesday he asked her for a walk just as the late day was reddening the snow. And Wednesday afternoon he brought round a little pair of skates, and as they went slipping along the crystal floor of the lake, hand in hand, far into the sunset, there seemed to be a meaning in life for Josephine that she had never seen before. And on Saturday there was another sleighing party up the lake in the big swan-boat sleigh. Will mentioned their going as a matter of course; and when the sleigh with its great horses came round, Will was driving it in as masterful a way as he did everything else; and he

swung Josephine up beside him, and if she herself drove now and then a mile or two, with laughing enjoyment, no one else knew it; and when they reached the place none of all the girls looked so distractingly lovely as Josephine did in her white wool dress with its multitude of pink ribbons, no one danced so lightly, so blithely, so full of an unconscious interior joy, with the burning tint on her cheek, the burning light in her eye; and no one showed such a radiant sort of life as Will, silent, watchful, but now and again clasping Josephine in the dance as if he would never let her go.

It was no matter how much the others surrounded and crowded them by-and-by in the big sleigh, starting for home after the moon had gone down. Will had given up the reins, and had planted Josephine in the warm spot directly under the shelter of the high box-seat in front

of them; and in vain Reuben flourished his long whip and shouted at the horses—Josephine never heeded; and in vain Mary Madden held out that lantern to light the way for Reuben, that Will might see her slender hand prettily gloved and half frozen—Will never knew it. Close together there in the long side-seat, with the others all around them laughing, talking, singing, it was his arm about her that kept her safe, it was his shoulder against which her little head rested, it was his hand that held hers and kept it warm. And once—once when it was darkest, and all the rest were gayest—his face had bent to hers, and the cold cheeks had touched, and for a swift silent moment his lips had met her own, and he felt her trembling, and held her closer; and then presently, as if to keep the secret to himself, he also began to sing, rolling out the college songs he knew in his

strong, rich barytone; and the music of his voice and of the tune, and the bells and the horses' feet, all seemed to Josephine to be keeping time to the song the stars sing together. And if, when Will lifted her out of the sleigh at last, and ran with her up to the door, and stood an instant within the dark porch, their lips found each other again a sweet mad instant, who was there to say?

Snow came next day, after the starless night; but there was not snow enough in heaven to keep Josephine at home from church. Never had such music filled the little house of praise as in that morning hymn, when her voice thrilled at least one of her hearers through and through. Nothing but a soul filled with effulgent happiness could make such melody as that. Will thought of larks and bobolinks, of the nightingale and the mocking-bird, of singing women and of angels' songs,

and ended all by thinking only of Josephine. If love wrapped him, rather than the atmosphere of the place, it was perhaps the manifestation of the best and richest that as yet he knew or could dream of in the universe. But when the congregation turned for the last hymn, and again that sweet voice soared and sang, her eyes, lifted from the book, met his, and suddenly the color surged up and dyed her face, and the voice faltered and trembled and ceased, and the rest of the choir sang on as best they could—

“The dearest idol I have known,
Whate’er that idol be,
Help me to tear it from Thy throne,
And worship only Thee!”

And if some of the congregation were inclined to be scandalized, yet I think there was not one among them, such is human nature and its silent sympathy, who did not know

that morning what was the matter with the voice of little Josephine Grey.

It was four years since the cold sweetness and wild heart-throb of that blissful sleigh-ride. Will, who had entered college in advance and had studied with diligence, had taken his medical degree, and had come to practice at last, finding it hard and slow work between the knowledge of the young doctor's youth and the remarkable general health of the community. He was out in storm or shine, with long and lonely drives at dead of night, with irregular meals, with broken sleep, with reluctant pay. But he was full of the sacred zeal of his profession, pouring out the wine of life, bringing healing as it were with his touch, giving himself lavishly, making now and then a marvelous cure, coming slowly to be known among

the good country-folk as a worker of miracles; and happy, gloriously happy in it all, for Josephine was his, and every day brought him nearer the time when he should wear her as a seal upon his arm.

But Josephine herself was perhaps not so happy. She was tired, very tired—tired of the routine and racket of the school, that she had begun to keep when only a child herself; tired of the work that fell to her at home, too, while trying to spare her mother, with Agnes and Ellie studying and eager for pleasure as girls of twelve and fourteen sometimes are; tired of the pinch of poverty; tired, it may be, of the long waiting and suspense of her engagement. She loved Will, perhaps, as ardently as ever—his hearty, joyous nature, his upright spirit, his generous temper, his frank, bright face, all his great warmth and cordial feeling—himself! But in some

mysterious way nothing seemed worth while; here in the midst of happiness, and on the brink of her marriage, she was oppressed with nameless melancholy. Trifles irritated her; tears came at a word.

“In fact,” said Will, when various potions proved of no avail, “the dear nerves need rest. You must have a change.”

“How am I to have a change?” she answered, peevishly.

“You must!” said Will. “Great heavens!” starting to his feet and walking up and down the room, and rumpling his hair to fresh brightness with every turn. “What makes the people here so healthy? Does every doctor have to wait so long for paying patients? To think that I, whose business is to heal the sick, should be eager for sickness to come! Oh, I’m not, I’m not! But—”

“I don’t know what patients have to do with my having a change,”

she said, hanging listlessly over the arm of the sofa.

“At least it could be a change then from one house to another. And I could send you South, if I couldn’t go with you—”

“As if—as if I would go! Oh, I mean—I never supposed you would be willing to have me go away from you!” the tears spurting.

“Josephine! My darling! Only to make you well and strong, that we may be together always! I have enough now for some such journey if you will only take it and use it so, my little dear—”

“The money you’ve saved towards our furnishing! Oh, I don’t believe you care for me at all! You are worn out with me! I—oh—” And all Will could do was to take the unreasoning little thing in his arms, and hold her close, and pity and love her with all his might.

“You dear Will!” she said then,

when the sharp nerves were sheathed again. "If you were always here, always holding me so, I should not be so wicked!"

"It is that abominable school!" said Will. "It would wear a stone image to a pebble. It must be given up!"

And things were at this pass when Mrs. Applegate made her sister the morning visit which has been mentioned, returning by the afternoon train, and although a little late for dinner, and finding Mr. Applegate somewhat indignant over her delay, coming in so bright and cheery, with regrets that she had lingered—but when you were with pleasant people you sometimes forgot how time was passing, even when pleasanter people were waiting for you at home—going upstairs before he could retort, making herself ready in a twinkling, and coming down handsome and unruffled, and

with a spicy anecdote about the Forrester's last affair, that she had kept for a *bonne bouche* at some bitter moment, that she caused him quite to forget that he had been out of sorts, or to ask her where she had been calling, especially as the sherry was just cold enough, and there was plenty of green fat in the soup.

But fate and fortune always favor the bold; and so Mrs. Applegate found when, the next morning in the breakfast-room, her husband asked her to write a note for him, the gout having disabled his fingers that day sufficiently to make the use of them more than commonly uncomfortable.

Now Mrs. Applegate's handwriting had not been a strong point in the early years, and she had been wise enough to know it. But she had locked herself up in her room with pen and paper, and had written

laborious copies day after day; she had written out, moreover, whole romances of high life from the print, and the Polite Letter-Writer's Manual into the bargain. She had attained, however, only a large, scratchy script, whose haste and boldness disguised its want of early culture and grace. But she wrote the desired note for Mr. Applegate with great ease and pleasantness, of course.

“What an infernal hand you women of fashion do write!” he growled as he looked it over. “Two words to a line, and a page and a half to a paragraph!”

“I know it,” she said, sweetly. “But if I employed a secretary to write my notes, as Mrs. Devonshire and Mrs. Longwood do, I should be more expense to you than I am now.”

“A secretary, indeed!” he exclaimed, tossing her the note to seal.

"I wonder what you'll be setting up next?"

"Oh, I've no idea of it. Unless—unless, that is, you go to work again on that genealogical story of your family; and then—why, then I might have to do so. Although really I should like to have a hand myself in that story of the Applegates. There is no family with so much romance in it, with such fine Colonial happenings. But my own fingers are so stiff some days that I don't believe I could keep pace with your rapid dictation," she said, opening and closing her plump white hand with a shower of sparkles. "I know I couldn't."

"Well," said Mr. Applegate, as he picked up his morning paper again, after a glance at the portrait of a dignitary of the old Province days upon the wall "I am going on with it."

"I do hope you will."

"It has to be done," he said, a

little pompously. "And there is no one else to do it. Frances never will. Laura never can—"

"Then," said Mrs. Applegate, "I will tell you what we might do. I have a little niece, a little rose-bud—well, I can't say what I think of her, for she is the very image of what I was at her age—"

"A niece?"

"Yes. I have never troubled you much, you know—I have never troubled you at all—about my family—"

"I didn't know you had a family!" exclaimed the courtly gentleman.

"Yes. Quite as good a family as the Applegates," she replied, serenely. "Such of the Applegates as I have seen," she added. "They have not much money—"

"A not unusual circumstance."

"But what they have answers their needs. This little damsel has kept a school—the pretty baby! And she

writes a very plain and agreeable hand—”

“Oh, I see! And you propose to bring her down here?”

“Why, if we need a secretary, and can get one for nothing—”

“I don’t know about the ‘nothing.’ High-toned articles always fetch their price. What sort is she? Fit to associate with my daughters?”

“She is fit to associate with your wife,” said Mrs. Applegate, with gentle dignity.

“By Jove, you’re a stunner!” said her husband, in a glow of appreciation. He had always had an amused pleasure in seeing Mrs. Applegate carry things with a high hand. He liked sometimes to give her the opportunity.

“She is much prettier than my step-daughters. Excuse me, dear, if I say much more amiable,” said Mrs. Applegate, who had discovered that her husband was sometimes

more easily directed when she challenged him than when she submitted to him. "She is a little sunbeam. I don't think I am prejudiced or partial—"

"Not in the least."

"I have not been with her enough of late years to be greatly concerned about her. I haven't done quite right. It must be a half-dozen years since I have seen her, till— lately. But I can assure you she would be an ornament to your house, and bring life and youth and health into it. And it would not be a bit of a bad thing for either of us if she came for a little stay."

"Do you want her?"

"Why, yes, I think so."

"Humph! Who is going to dress her?"

"Who has always dressed her?" said Mrs. Applegate, with a glance of indignation. "She will have clothes enough."

"Well, *I* shan't pay for them. Mark that. But I'd just as lief she came for a season or so. A pretty girl's a pleasant thing to have round. And if she's a success, she'll bring some fresh life into the house, as you say. And if it doesn't work, she needn't stay."

"If you remember," said Mrs. Applegate, with a slight flush on the still rare moulding of a dimpled cheek, "the insinuations made to you by Frances, concerning marrying a cook—"

"Pshaw! pshaw! You've much too long a memory. That was in her first raptures."

"Then I should like to have her see my pretty Josephine, with the refinement of a flower in every line—"

"And you'll try your fist at bringing out a beauty! By Jove, I'd like to see you! You can do it! You can do it!" he chuckled. And the fancy

so pleased him that he had to lay down his newspaper and gaze at her a moment and have another laugh. "Well, perhaps I will pay for them," he said.

III

As Mrs. Applegate was human, she would have liked at that moment to take off the rings he had given her and throw them at him, or to do some other violent thing showing him she did not care for his money.

But she did care for his money. And there was Josephine—for yesterday's touch of mother earth had given her family feeling fresh strength. And after all he was kind, in some ways he was fine, he was handsome, she was fond of him; and her swift anger subsided. He was still looking at her and smiling, for with all his grumbling the fact remained that he admired her, admired her good-nature and natural grace, her tact and talent; the way she surmounted obstacles, carried

herself, carried all before her when need was, justified him, too. And she made him very comfortable. On the whole, the day he married her was a day to be marked with a white stone, he felt. And if now and then her pretensions gave him amusement, he enjoyed the amusement; but otherwise he was loyal to her and let no one else know it, enjoying it all the more that he had to enjoy it by himself. "You are a trump, Mrs. Applegate!" said he. "You're a trump! You know how to make a man young again! It's a pleasure to have you round!" And then Mrs. Applegate stepped across the rug and bent and kissed him; and he really considered that he had done a good thing for her, and had done it graciously, and had won her gratitude. And he went down to his club with a warmth at his heart that made him whirl his cane and step out briskly, notwithstanding his gouty

foot, and made the Chauncey-Bedfords, who happened to drive by, remark, after their smiling nods and his lifted hat, that really it would be a long day before Frances Boylston and her sister divided those millions they were waiting for. "His wife certainly makes him very content. By-the-way, has one ever discovered where she came from?"

"My dear," said Mrs. Chauncey-Bedford to her young daughter-in-law, "I know her very well, and have the highest regard for her. I often use her horses when ours are lame. Frank Applegate told me himself that she belonged to one of the oldest families in the country. They lost a great deal of money when the turnpikes were thrown open. But any one can see that she is a gentlewoman. She has some old diamonds set in silver—a brooch surmounted by a coronet—I think she said something about her

mother once when I admired it." If Mrs. Applegate had heard her, so effusive would have been her satisfaction that she would gladly have given her the diamonds, but for that conjured apparition of her mother in the place of the old pawnbroker of Prague of whom she bought them.

And so that very day came the letter that made a fluttering in the dove-cote of the Greys, asking Josephine to spend the winter with her aunt, and telling her to come at once and come as she was, and her aunt would see to her wardrobe afterwards. And Mrs. Grey said she didn't know how she could spare her; but Will said go she must, and Agnes could take her school—she was older now than Josephine was when she first took it. And then he held her as if it were impossible for him to open his arms and release her, filled with the sense of danger, yet

sure that what was 'best for her was best for him.

The day that Mrs. Applegate received her reply was Monday; it was a saints' day, too; but she sacrificed her feeling in that direction and went out early to the bargain sales; and a number of bright remnants of China silks and crapes, of cloth, of ribbons, came home later in the day. She contemplated them with satisfaction, for they were paid for from what she used to call her own little scrap of money. She doubted if her gloves would not be too large; but her foot was an uncommonly small one, and she was sure that certain very pretty high-heeled affairs of her own would do for Josephine till she was in funds again.

Mr. Applegate had had to go out of town for a directors' meeting the day that Josephine came; and with a dressmaker and two seamstresses upstairs the next two days, several

of Mrs. Applegate's gowns were cut over and made up with new bodices and youthful colors and garnishings, till a street suit and a dinner dress and an evening gown were completed and others were planned, the dress-maker and her women employed for some days subsequently on further achievements, and Mr. Applegate none the wiser when he returned, as lunch was sent up to the sewing-room, and he was not down in the morning when they came, and he was dressing for dinner or was in the library when they went.

Mr. Applegate had reached home late, the train having been detained; he was chilled; he had not carried his point at the directors' meeting; and he was decidedly cross when he came in; and after a few words he went to his room and summoned Daniel. Mrs. Applegate had sent him up a cup of hot bouillon, although she had discreetly with-

drawn after brief greeting. And an hour later, rested and refreshed, he opened his door to descend to dinner in a somewhat less grumpy frame, and stopped surprised, bewildered, charmed, at what seemed to him the sweetest sound he had ever heard in his life.

It was Josephine singing—singing an old German hymn. He did not understand the words—sooth to say, the singer did not either—but he knew the tune; it was one his mother used to sing. But what a flute of a voice; how sweet, how rich, how fresh! Josephine did not know he had come back; she was singing to herself and letting out her heart to the music—a trifle homesick, thinking of her mother and the girls, greatly longing for Will, a little awed by all this unusual splendor, somewhat pleased to think it was her aunt's, vaguely feeling it was too much like the fortunes of a

Gurundeel in the *Arabian Nights* not to be a dream, and all the time loving the music of her hymn. She had on a soft gray long-skirted silk, the waist covered with a pointed cape of Irish lace that fell over the shoulder puffs, and long close cuffs of the lace ending at the elbows; there were some bows of pink ribbon on it. Nothing could have been simpler, nothing more picturesque in its way.

Mr. Applegate had quite forgotten about Josephine; but he recognized that cape. He had a talent for millinery. He remembered, however, in the same flash that a footman at the Herefords' had spilled coffee on the lace when it was a front breadth, and he was rather pleased with his wife's ingenuity in using it now. That was all right; she might turn her old clothes to what account she pleased. But that voice had stopped as he waited between the

portières surveying the singer. She stood up, the blush mounting her face till it looked like a rose indeed.

"So this is Josephine, is it?" he said. "Where's your aunt? Why isn't there some one— By Jove, you don't know who I am!"

"I suppose," said Josephine, timidly, the color going and coming, "that you are—my Uncle Applegate."

"That's it! By Jove, she's charming! Come here and kiss your Uncle Applegate!"

And Josephine, in a sudden access of gratitude and pleasure, ran forward and put her arms round his neck and kissed his plump red cheek. "Oh, how kind you are to me!" she whispered. And the old fellow enjoyed the swift, impulsive act so much that he would have liked to ask her to repeat it, if, being an epicure in his pleasures, he had not known that would have spoiled it all.

"Well," he said, "my wife was right. She always is. She said you would be an ornament to the house. Has she taken you out yet? Seen the city? Been to the State House?"

"Now you are laughing at me," said Josephine.

"No," said Mr. Applegate, planting himself in front of the fire, and looking at her where he kept her standing for the pleasure of the sight. "I want to see if you are one of the degenerate girls that care for balls and calls and fripperies, and have no interest in—"

"Yes," said Josephine, lifting her great lucid eyes a moment and then dropping them, the smile on her lips lovely in its arch audacity, "I am."

"By Jove, then you shall have them!" cried Mr. Applegate. "Know any of the college chaps?"

"One," said Josephine. "Rob Campbell."

“Campbell — Campbell — the Virginia Campbells?”

“Oh, no; he is from our place; a nice fellow. He is studying hard, and he has won a scholarship, and we are all so proud of him—”

“Oh, he’s a grind. Yes. Do you know, you’re precious green?”

“Oh, I suppose so!” said Josephine piteously.

“To think that sort of fellow good as a dancing-man. Of course you’re out?”

“Out?” said Josephine.

“Come, come, not so green as all that! You’ll have to learn the jargon. But you’re as good as a play. I am going to renew my youth with you. Here—sit down. I mean, if you please. Not there—opposite, where I can look at you.”

“That is my aunt’s place.”

“All right. That little chair, then. There. Has any one ever told you that you are very pretty?”

"Oh, yes, indeed! I mean—that is—I—"

"That's all right, too. Always tell the truth. There's no harm in your being pretty. No harm in your knowing it. A prince should always know his kingdom. The harm is in your pluming yourself, generically speaking, because you are better looking than I am—"

"Oh, I'm not!" cried Josephine, before she thought again. "My aunt said you were—very—very—fine looking," and she stopped, catching her breath in a frightened way.

"And what do you say?"

Josephine looked up again through the long lashes, a swift, sparkling, sidelong glance. "You said my aunt was always right, you know."

"That's good! That's good! Here she comes. My dear, I have been making acquaintance with our little niece. She'll do. She'll do. We must make it gay for her."

Mrs. Applegate flashed her husband a look that made him feel as if he were very fond of her.

"Does Frances know she is here? Has Laura called? Frances must give her a luncheon at once, and Laura a high tea. I'll speak to them. I'm glad I told Gervais to come round to dinner to-night. You had better send out cards for a dancing party in her honor. Got everything to wear, my dear?"

"Oh, yes," said Mrs. Applegate, blandly, before Josephine could reply. "Her little white dress is just the thing."

"Beads and things?"

"Young girls don't wear jewels, you know," said Mrs. Applegate.

"A pearl or two 'll do her no harm. I'll see to that. She's a little flower. And she sings like a bird. Well, you must take her about all you can; you won't expect me to go a great deal. But I'll be

on guard now and then. And she is to write for me in the morning."

"Oh, may I?" cried Josephine.

"Mrs Applegate," said her husband, "when you said she was a sunbeam you showed yourself a woman of discretion. And I might know that the child of any sister of the woman I saw fit to marry would be as much a treasure as her aunt."

"Oh," said Josephine to her aunt, half under her breath, "how good he is!"

"He is a prince among men!" said Mrs. Applegate, following the complimentary mood of the moment. And just then Mr. Gervais was announced.

"May I trust you were alluding to me?" said Mr. Gervais, as he bowed over the hand of his hostess. And directly afterward the soft-shod Daniel, who filled many capacities, murmured to his mistress that dinner was served.

You may be sure that Josephine made the most of the week that followed, in getting her bearings, as Mr. Applegate said, with driving, the theater, a morning concert, an afternoon of receiving calls, and a guest or two at dinner every day, where, prepared by her aunt's hints on the days they had dined alone together, there was no fault to be found with her. "The little maid is under full sail," said Mr. Applegate. "She has caught the spirit of the thing. Now let her have her way." And she was presented to the world at her aunt's dancing party, about as dainty an object, her aunt thought, as ever gladdened eye, in her white crêpe, out of whose wreaths of white ostrich feathers rose the whiter throat and shoulders and the head of a young goddess—a young goddess whose rosy flush, whose luminous eyes and dimpling smile and golden aura of hair, made her

seem the very keeper of happiness. And evidently aunt and uncle were of one mind here; for just as she came into her aunt's sitting-room to be inspected, Mr. Applegate himself clasped a string of pearls about her throat, in what seemed to his wife a freak of such unprecedented prodigality that for a moment she was almost apprehensive, till, taking counsel with herself, she remembered that for whatever Mr. Applegate thought righteous expenditure he was always willing to spend, only preferring to spend the money himself. This the jewels he had given her testified, although Mr. Applegate had merely felt in that matter that as Frances and Laura had their mother's jewels, the equity of the thing, independently of the splendor belonging to his name and house, made it right that his second wife should have no less. If he locked them all up in his safe every night,

it was not because he distrusted their nominal owner, but because it was his habit, and it was best. Now, when he had clasped those pearls about her white throat, well pleased with himself, in spite of his lame foot Mr. Applegate whirled Josephine the length of the hall, to the waltz which one of the violinists was trying over in the distance—to see, he said, if her step was right. “Now I shall have a good clip of the gout to pay for that,” he cried. “But it was worth it! You little witch, you are like that old witch Medea—you make a man young again!”

“Why do you say so much about being young again?” she asked. “Do you feel old? You don’t look old—at least,” as she saw his look of surprise, “not so very old.”

“Ah, there now!” he exclaimed. “To ruin it all! But I like your truth. And, on the whole, it is good

to find that I don't strike a little stranger as so very old."

"But you're not, you know!"

"That's right. Keep it up. Now for a turn back!" And just then Mrs. Frances Boylston stood at the head of the stairs, dropping her long cloak, and looking at her father with eyes of displeased amazement.

"At your age!" she said.

"There, Mrs. Applegate," he cried rather breathlessly, as he regained his wife's side, "how is that for an old man?"

"I don't allow any one to call you an old man," said Mrs. Applegate. "Good-evening, Frances. I am glad to see you. I hope Willis is coming?" And she descended with her husband in stately fashion, Josephine waiting to go down with Mrs. Boylston.

"Your father is so kind to me!" she said, timidly. "I should be

very homesick if he were not; it is all so strange here."

"Homesick?" said Mrs. Boylston, in a tone as cold and distant as the snow on the top of the Himalayas, and quite as if she wondered had the girl a home to be homesick for, and said no more, although she lingered with one of the maids repairing some injury to her lace, till people began to come, whom Josephine of course did not know, and to whom she was talking as if Josephine did not exist; so that at last the little maid went down alone, Mrs. Boylston, not daring fully to disobey her father's behest that she should receive with his wife, finally following, but paying no further attention to Josephine whatever.

But nothing did Josephine know of it—the men surrounding her like humming-birds round a blossom; not even the girls jealous of such radiant loveliness, as girls never are

when the loveliness is real, of such compelling sweetness. Nor had the dowagers anything at all to say, for she spoke to them artlessly, as if, although immensely respectable, they were her own age. If now and then she caught Mrs. Boylston's dark glance, or the slight scornful sneer on the face of the sister Laura, it never occurred to her that with all the world their own, in the way of station and income and pleasure, they could be grudging her the excitement of her brief visit, or have any fear of her, a little country girl, or feel any concern because she could give pleasure to the father whose house they had left empty.

"Your mother has done this very well," said Mr. Applegate to Laura, as she was about to leave.

"Your wife has," said Mrs. Laura, majestically.

"Tush! tush!" said Mr. Applegate. "Your father's wife is your

mother, to all intents and purposes. And it will be better for you to consider her so. She would be a good mother if you two simpletons allowed her to be. I have been quite as patient, Laura, as I intend. You have had plenty of time to correct erroneous impressions; and if there is any more of this Goneril and Regan business, you will hear something break! Now I want you and Frances, each of you, to give this little rose-bud a luncheon next week."

"It is out of the question, father!
I—"

"Then it must be put in the question. Bulfinch, I want your wife to give my little niece a luncheon early next week. A fine one. She can choose her own day."

And a luncheon she gave—a pink luncheon—and with her husband's wiser eye upon her preparations, and her father on the alert, it had to

be a fine one. And Frances continued the festivity with another a few days later, making it a primrose occasion; not entirely without thought that primrose-color, which suited herself, would be particularly unbecoming to so fair a creature as Josephine. But Josephine, in her green cloth and its seal borders, and a great bunch of yellow primroses in her dress, looked as if primrose-color were the one thing she ought to have about her to set her beauty off.

"How becoming this soft tint is to you!" she said to the dark and dour Frances. "You should always wear primrose. I am very fond of it, too," she went on, with that sunbeam effect of hers that ought to melt a rock. "I don't know what makes you all so kind to me," she said. "You give me so much to remember when I go home. It is the great world I have read about, you

see." But it did not melt Frances. The girl was really too charming!

But after the dancing party, of course, there were swarms of calls on Mrs. Applegate's day; and Mr. Applegate made a point of being at home, and was not in the least dissatisfied to see how very well his wife's niece acquitted herself, and to have it evident that he had married no adventuress or woman without name or family — his daughters' intimation to that effect now and again ringing in his ears like a disturbance of the hearing — but a woman whose kindred had the gentle graciousness of this beautiful girl.

Mrs. Applegate always made it a point, wherever she went, to be at home in the late afternoon. It had usually been with some foreign or domestic lion, who roared gently. But Josephine was sufficient for the moment; and the people who dropped in for a cup of tea at that hour evi-

dently found it very agreeable, so many came, and came so often, and stayed so long. And when they were gone Josephine sang to her uncle; and the only drawback then, he said, was that she sang so like a seraph that he could not go to sleep, and so lost his usual nap. But that voice must be attended to, he declared; and he ordered her to have a daily lesson with the Madame—the Madame, however, who had trained many a noble voice, saying the lessons were only practice, as the singing-teacher had already given a correct method, and done all that was necessary for the voice—a voice it would have been a pleasure to train. And Josephine did not announce the fact that her teacher was only the master of the country singing-school, although he was an enthusiast who had made the tour of Europe on foot for the sake of the Baireuth festival, and old Robert

Franz had written a song for him, and Miss Pearson had more than once remarked upon his being a genius.

"It would be folly to deny it, Josephine," said Mrs. Applegate, before they came down to dinner together one day, "you are going to be the beauty next season. It's too late this. I wish I had gone up for you last November instead of in February. Mr. Gervais says there isn't one among them that can keep step with you. You are going to have it all your own way. There's something about you that is even more fetching than beauty—that air of not caring, of knowing something better than this—"

"But I do care, Aunt Josephine. I care immensely. If there's anything better than this—" She stopped, and shut her eyes, for Will's face floated just before them. "I was dizzy," she said, smiling.

She knew, by this time, as well as Mr. Gervais did, how enchanting that smile was.

Mr. Gervais was already in the drawing-room when they came in,—a fat little gourmet for whom a pretty girl was an attraction, but a very minor one in comparison with a good dinner.

“Pray, will you tell me, Mr. Gervais, how you came here?” said Mrs. Applegate. “I did not expect you before the game. Weren’t you over in New York?”

“How I came here? It wouldn’t interest you in the least. Beacon Street is the most commonplace of highways.”

“Come, let us see if his gondola is tied to a post out there on the water,” cried Josephine. And on her way she caught a glimpse of herself in a mirror, and paused before the lovely reflection of rosy crape, and a fluff of pale ostrich

tips, the damask cheek, the white, full throat, the tangle of gold hair, the great starry eyes, the lips, whose fine curves melted into dimples as they parted over teeth like rice pearl. "It isn't half bad!" she said, laughing across her shoulder at Gervais as she went down the room.

"By George!" he said to Mrs. Applegate. "Was it a month ago that this little witch came out of the woods? Was it out of the woods she came? The town will never take the wild flavor out of her! She will be a high stepper; but she wants a gold harness."

Mrs. Applegate's smile said many things.

"You see," said the wise man, answering it, "this thing called love is the beginning of trouble. But to look at it rationally now, a brilliant and agreeable young woman at the head of one's house, of good birth, perhaps, but without a penny to her

name, so that she shall feel a sense of obligation for all the luxuries and enjoyments with which one has surrounded her—”

“That is your idea of marriage?” said Mrs. Applegate. “I doubt if Josephine has not quite a different one!”

Whether Josephine had or not, Mr. Gervais had an opportunity of finding out presently, as he joined her at the great window looking out at the bay dark and dim in the twilight, the distant lights shining like scattered jewels on its purple.

“When I see you in white,” he said, “it gives me the impression of a Mabel Morrison rose, when a Mabel Morrison is without a flaw. When I see you in green, it is something delicate and yet pronounced, as a maidenhair fern. When I see you in bloom-color—”

“Really,” said Josephine, “you have a right to your impressions.

But I don't know that you have a right to impart them to me."

He laughed.

"I like them with some spirit," said he.

"Certainly, Mr. Gervais"—began Josephine.

"Oh, yes, I know all about it," he said, with a penitential gesture. "*Mea culpa.* That's all right. Shall I sit down? Who's the dinner for? What's he done?"

"Discovered a new orchid, I believe," said Josephine, in a demure wonder at his manners, before doing what he would have called catching on.

"You don't say so! Epiphytal?"

She laughed.

"I knew you had an orchid house," she said. "I suppose," grown bolder, "you spend on it every year what would maintain and educate a dozen families in moderate circumstances."

"I dare say," he said, with a slight

yawn. "Tell me about this fellow."

"The orchid man? Oh, I don't know much about him," she said, calmly, still buttoning her glove. "I believe this orchid was found in a jungle in the heart of the tropics somewhere, and cost the lives of a troop of soldiers, and the sanity of several others, and a war to the death between three or four wild tribes."

"And the slavery and slaughtering and eating of several tender young girls—"

"Mr. Gervais!"

"Not that you mean to say all this was done for the sake of getting the orchid."

"Only the orchid seems to be all that came of it," said Josephine. "Oh, of course, it's unpleasant. One oughtn't to mention it," she continued with a manner in which she did not know herself. "But

you've only to look at the flower to see all the wickedness there is in its red and yellow flaunting."

"It seems to me you are a little savage yourself."

"I think you are very rude to call me a little savage."

"I mean slightly disaffected as to orchids and the *raison d'etre* of dinner parties. You don't like our mode of attack on life here?"

"Oh, yes, I do; some of it. I like these houses,"—

"Palaces reduced to the ranks, the rank and file of the people."

"Yes, I like this one, these great suites of rooms, this ivory finish, these rugs made for Indian princes. I like the paintings—that Corot, that Millet, that little Rousseau; you see I have learned—"

"Oh, yes; you caught the step in no time."

"That looks as though I had no ear, then?"

"On the contrary, you are all ear."

"Things one would rather not have said!"

"I mean the ear of Fine Ear. But you were saying you like this house?"

"Yes—the ample draperies, the little room with the Luca della Robbia panels, and the faded Boucher tapestry—"

"It isn't faded. It is *fade*. The colors sublimed in the beginning to their highest power of tender melancholy—"

"I didn't know you were a poet, Mr. Gervais."

"Let me tell you in that ear of yours, Miss Josephine, if there is anything in the world I despise it is a poet and his poetry. My house, too, is one of these palaces—"

"Apropos of what? I don't believe there's a Corot in it," she interposed, a little startled by her successful assumption of a too flippant ease.

"Well, no," he said, staring at her. "How did you know? But there are a Vibert, and a Zamacois, and an Escosura, and a Bougereau—"

"Really," said Josephine, "when I was a child we used to play with bits of broken crockery. And how proud and loud and mad and glad we were if we found a piece that had a whole flower on it!"

He laughed. "Different places, same manners," he said. "Playthings for this age, and playthings for that. But that plaything came to me without finding; it was my father's before me—all but a few canvases and curios—and is about complete. It—it only wants a mistress."

"Indeed?" said Miss Josephine, coolly. "Something not hard to find in this—"

"Something deuced hard to find and exactly suit!"

"Strange," said Josephine, absently, with an air of reflection, her

finger on her lip. "They want beauty, wit, charm, all the virtues, all the graces; in short—"

"Perfection," said Mr. Gervais, gravely, looking at her.

"And they will give in return—a house full of curios."

"More than that," said Mr. Gervais. "An honorable name, a bank account, limitless luxury, the ransacking of the world for pleasures—"

"And love?" said Josephine.

"By heaven!" he said, stooping over her, "you almost make me think so."

But here Mrs. Applegate, gracious in purple velvet and old lace, was welcoming her guests, and Mr. Gervais obeyed her slight but imperious gesture, and went forward.

Josephine watched him—the short, rotund and full-fed shape, with the gait which belongs to such; the small bald head; the fat, red, rather

genial face as he turned about; the air of a little portly puffing pasha who could buy slaves, as he stood there; the air of a big gourmet as he sat beside her at the dinner table afterward, mightily pleased at the *entremet* he liked, a little irritated that the sherry was not properly cooled.

"And he wants perfection," she sighed aloud.

"Miss Josephine," he murmured, "you are perfection."

She looked at him with a sidelong gaze under her white, downcast lids—he a little flushed with his wine, the truffled turtle's fin disappearing in large gobbets. She was angry with herself for her familiarity, her impertinence. This, then, was what the possession of one of the great fortunes, of one of the old names, of one of the fine houses, one of the summer palaces by the sea, of a stable full of racers, of the most

and best there was in the new life that had seemed so rich and inexhaustible to her, made them! And then as if an electric spark had touched her, another face filled her vision for a moment, as once before it had done, in place of this puffed, rubose countenance, with its only half-veiled *grosseté*, dark, pale, starry, the face of one who had a soul; and a song that she had heard Will sing seemed to be sounding in some far distance, as if a voice called to her. She knew the lights were not dim, although they seemed so. She was afraid she might be going to make a scene. She leaned back in her chair, and began to fan herself.

“Do you call this dining?” said Mr. Gervais. “The room’s too warm? I was just thinking that your aunt is the only person I know whose dining-room doesn’t heat you and make you lay the blame on the wine. What!”—as he looked at her

now—"Are you ill? Here!"—with a motion to a servant—"drink this. I—I was too precipitate. That's right. The color's coming back. No one has observed you," he said, kindly.

Of course, the color was coming back? What had she said, what had she done, that gave him this right of proprietorship? No one had observed, indeed! What was there to observe? "How do you like this Rudesheimer?" she heard him run on.

"Isn't it the wine Coleridge speaks of?" she asked.

"By Jove, I say! I envy you!" he broke forth. "Here you bring a fresh palate to all the new savors, the infinitely delicate variations of taste—absolutely new sensations. To have them all over again I would give—well, we can't live two lives in one. Only I didn't make the best of mine. No boy does.

Rushed it, and dulled the sensitiveness before I knew enough to appreciate the difference between Johannisberg and Chianti, except for the color. Well the next best thing will be the training of an untried taste like yours. I shall live my green and salad days over again, and enjoy them, vicariously to be sure, but with more—”

Ah, heavens, what stuff was this creature talking? Why did she need to remember so well just then a moment of the summer twilight when she and Will sat by the woody wayside, and a late bee went by, and he hushed her to hear the sound of its wings and compare it to that of the wasp following—a difference too fine for human music to note. And then he had wondered, if the great ether of space really existed, whether it were absolutely incapable of sound as of heat; and, if the movements of the stars called out a rush of

tones, at what lofty and all but infinite distances those tones became braided into harmony, and at what half-way star one might hear the great song of Lyra just shining faintly overhead then in the deep blue.

“Well, what if she did recall that moment?” she asked herself. It was the heavy smell of all these flowers bringing back the odor of that sweet-brier vine behind them. “What of it? What higher were sounds than tastes? Wasn’t one just as much of the body as the other?” But she knew, as she looked at the little man maundering on between the lusciousness of his morsels, whether or not one was of the body and one was of the soul, or of the effort toward a soul—whether one was of the earth earthy, and the other of heaven heavenly.

A prickling sensation, that Mr. Gervais would have called indiges-

tion, suddenly set all her nerves dancing with anger. She avenged herself by bending and listening eager-eyed to Mrs. Jack Pepperidge, who across the table was sparkling out in a diatribe upon the wine Mr. Gervais preferred, the town he called his sacred city, the people with such an inherited instinct for migration that, as they could not leave the town, they had taken the town up and set it down somewhere else, and had moved bodily from a hillside to a swamp; upon the poverty of imagination, in their architecture, the shabbiness of the very street they were on, the folly of having closed a water-side where Venetian merchant princes, with such a chance to drive spiles, would have built their separate palaces, set in blossoming gardens, all the way up bay and river.

“Oh, this will never do,” said Mr. Gervais. “I can’t have you enjoy-

ing this sort of thing about the town where you're to live—”

“I don't know that I'm to live in it,” she said.

He stared at her with his round eyes; but other people broke in then, and he could only say to her before he went away that night—say in a high-handed way: “Is it the Hunt Ball to-morrow night, or the small and early german? I am coming first to know if you are going to live in this town—”

“Or die somewhere else? Does it really amount to that?”

And Josephine knew in that moment that, with Daniel's assistance, Mr. Gervais would never find her again within these doors unless surrounded by a crowd.

There were not many nights of the season left now; but those were so filled with gayeties that Josephine's sleep only began perilously near daylight. All the same she knew why

she was there, and she was ready to write at her uncle's dictation whenever he took out his papers.

“Come, come,” said he. “This won’t do. In bed at three or four in the morning, or worse, and out of it at this hour? Where’s the beauty-sleep? We won’t have any more writing at present, and when we begin again it shall be for the hour before lunch. That will be better for me, too. And, my dear,” to his wife, “I am rather tired of those little street suits. Have another for her. Have a pearl gray, very light and dressy—”

“With little capes then, a quantity of them, lined with rose pink!” cried his delighted wife.

“And edges of marabout, down, feathers, something fluffy, you know what,” said Mr. Applegate, waving his hands airily. “And a big gray hat with plumes, and all that, you know. Don’t mention the expense!

I'll have our little girl dressed as becomes her, if it breaks a bank!"

Mr. Applegate did not suspect that this sunny thing had, with the melting power of her sweetness, her happiness, her success, her companionship, broken a stouter bank than one with vaults of chilled steel. And when she burst into nervous tears of excitement and gladness, her uncle hardly knew when he had had a keener pleasure than in kissing off the salt drops, and assuring her that she was his own pet, his pretty dear, his little new daughter, wondering then to hear his own voice, and leaving off in a startled way.

"Mr. Applegate," said his wife, somewhat solemnly that night, "when the Lord made you he made a good man!" And Mr. Applegate began to think so himself.

IV

Mrs. Applegate, very well satisfied with things as far as they had gone, took her prize out of town early. She said to herself that Josephine in the effort to overcome and conceal her shyness was just a little fresh, and that the experiences of a short European trip might be useful. It was no matter about mistakes over there. They would go in a fast boat with the Jack Pepperidges, who were off for a six weeks' trip, just to look over a foreign cutter. It would be too early for London, but they could do a little something in the way of finery in Paris, acquiring some *savoir-faire* on the way. As Mrs.

Applegate said, so was it done. They would return just as the trial races were on at Newport. There were opportunities in the trial races. Lawrence Berkeley, for instance, who all last year had been at the ends of the earth, was interested in one of the yachts, and the perspicacious lady knew that where a dot was indispensable with the European lover, with the American lover it was quite another affair.

The Neckan lay on the edge of the fleet. They had just made colors aboard, and fired the sunset gun, and were anchored some cable lengths away from another yacht on either side. All the inner harbor, indeed, was gay with the lesser craft, waiting for the work of the next day. The town sparkled in the evening light behind them, but the White Ladye when she came in left the sea outside lying high and dim, where the black and gold line of the

Valiant made relief, and the outlines of the Neckan, of the Powhatan, and of the big man-of-war were like phantoms. Lettuce leaves and fruit-parings floated by the little launches that were darting all about like caddis-flies on the inside water, with the boats of the navy yard. There was an agreeable sense of stir and of impending dinner in the air; presently, there would be toilettes of a sort, and night on the dark, still water-world, and sleep after toil. The Mayflower crept in like a ghost in the purpling air, and all her white array slid down and left her. And then the lights began to twinkle out, and, as if by signal, the whole inner fleet put on a myriad of other twinkles with electric bulbs and green and red sparks, till the harbor was a sheet of jewels.

Through all this cheerful preparation for pleasure, now sliding along the dark, oily swell, and now break-

ing the wake of light of this and that boat, into their life a moment and gone again, seeing the faces of the men in their sea négligée, and of the women, these trim in yachting suits and those wearing big flower-laden hats and gorgeous gowns, slipped the launch of the Neckan, carrying various stores from town, the mail, and Mrs. Applegate and her niece, who had come down to join the yacht outside.

"Oh!" cried Mrs. Applegate, as they welcomed her on the Neckan, "this is solid comfort," and she looked along the deck while drawing off her gloves. "I declare I dared not move on the little Minnow for fear of upsetting the whole business. I assure you when we came round the Point and she stood on end at every big wave and made a spring over into the next, I felt of no more worth than a bubble." And moving easily on her way with saluta-

tions to Mr. Applegate's friends, she disappeared after Josephine.

When they came on deck again, under the awning with its fringe of lights, a white apparition loomed some way off, a yacht that had come to anchor while they were at dinner, "The Pendragon," the sailing-master said in answer to Mr. Applegate's inquiry, "Mr. Lawrence Berkeley's Pendragon."

Mr. Lawrence Berkeley was at that moment leaning on the rail of the Pendragon, nothing of him visible but the spark of his cigar, and looking down and across at the Neckan. "By Jove, Gervais!" he exclaimed, "do you see that?" and the movement of his cigar indicated the lighted deck of the Neckan and the beautiful girl standing there while some one dropped a wrap over her shoulders. She wore a white Venetian silk, which she had brought along, in case they dressed for

dinner, because it would not cockle in the sea-air, and she had a bunch of green leaves on her breast.

"Do I see what?" said Mr. Gervais, lighting another cigar before he threw away the last and watched its little spark hiss and quench in the water.

"That!"

"That," said Mr. Gervais presently, "is a demonstrative dangerous pronoun, relating in this case to Miss Josephine Grey, the ingénue of last season, the toast of the next, and Mrs. Applegate's great card. If you know what's good for you, you'll put on steam and be out of this by day-break."

"Run away from danger, eh?"

"Gad, there's some dangers a man had best pass by on the other side."

"I don't know but you're right. Circe turned her men to beasts. This damsél seems to sour the milk of human kindness. Come, it's

rather interesting. There's a pleasure in deserving victory if you don't get it," said Mr. Lawrence Berkeley lightly. "Worthy antagonist, don't you know; a shiver of danger, a trembling on the edge of triumph. I'm feeling fairly fit. Suppose we are set over there to-morrow." And he looked again for the girl in the light with the green leaves on her breast. But she was lying back in her chair near the side, almost out of sight, and letting the cool air blow over her. Perhaps in the gloom his fancy magnified the beauty he had seen, and as he leaned toward it he could not tell whether he saw or dreamed its loveliness.

The great Sound Steamer went puffing and panting by with emerald and ruby glints, laying golden organ-pipes down the dark waters, a moving pavilion of light. The yachts rose and fell in the slow swell of the slipping tide; the stars looked faintly

out behind a veil of haze; now and then through the wide spaces long wafts of the perfume of flowers streamed past by way of the land, now and then by way of the sea came a strong fanning of its chill salt breath. From a distant deck a woman's voice rose and filled the dark hollow of the heaven with the sparkling deliciousness of Manon's drinking song. In the following silence only the chimes of the clocks from far-off towers fell, and the bells of this ship and of that sounded the hour; and there seemed to be in all the atmosphere of the summer night and sea a certain waiting and expectancy of pleasure if not of joy.

As for Mrs. Applegate, she knew that when Josephine stood up in the glow of the electric lights, with her white gown and her green leaves, while the wrap was dropped on her shoulders, the fleet was not so widely scattered that she was not the center

of many eyes, with or without a glass, in that circumambient darkness. It gave her a thrill of the joy that she felt ought to have belonged to her own youth. She liked it all the better that Josephine was utterly unconscious. And she was not at all surprised when at an early hour next morning Mr. Lawrence Berkeley and Mr. Gervais and some others presented themselves both to pay their compliments and to make arrangements for seeing the day's race to better advantage than on board the big Pendragon.

Breakfast was still on; and the young men did not seem to be unkindly disposed to a little compound of cracked ice and something else, that was brought them; and they were already quite well acquainted with the wife of Jack Pepperidge, whose boat was to follow the race, and who had come back on the steamer with Mrs. Applegate

and Josephine—when Josephine appeared, clad in a close-fitting white water-proof stuff, little rings loosed from her hair that was bound away in braids beneath the visored cap; and no one looked at any one else.

“We were all saying,” said Mrs. Applegate, “that this is perfect madness.”

“Perfect sport!” said Mrs. Pepperidge.

“Perhaps it is a little rash,” said Josephine. “But I find I am a seabird, and one may never have another chance at such a delightful madness.”

“We are just two of the crew,” said Mrs. Pepperidge. “Obey orders, and be animated ballast. I always go with Jack, you know; and he has let me fetch Josephine for a mascot,” the intimacy of the sea-voyage still lingering.

“I shall make him a flag with my own hands,” said Josephine.

“Fortunate fellow,” said Lawrence Berkeley with some audacity. And as Josephine looked at him she saw one of those men, tall, sunburnt, with the dark eye now having the glint of mockery and now the melancholy droop that belong in the young girl’s fancy to Hamlet, to Hassan, to Lucifer.

“I only wish Jack had built a boat as he first intended,” said Mrs. Pepperidge. “But, as it is, I suppose we are not in it on the Flying Scud, although Jack says we are. He takes odds we shan’t be far away. You’re racing, Mr. Berkeley?”

“I could wish I were to-day,” he said.

The lady looked at him a moment. ‘Able seaman?’ she asked. He nodded. ‘Come on then. I’ll make it right with Jack. We’ll send a hand ashore. But you know what it is? Under water half the time—

rather nerve-bracing. Josephine hasn't any nerves."

And rather wondering about the nerves, Mr. Berkeley went for his wet weather rig and found himself before long on his way to the Flying Scud, where she hung, dipping her pretty nose in the water, impatient as a tethered wild creature, with the wind blowing, the water curling, and all the fleet of sails spreading, changing, skimming and maneuvering, and all the steam yachts puffing and signaling and shrieking, and the three towering white beauties getting into line as they could for the hindering boats, only one crossing the line on the second, off at the gun-shot like three arrows from the bow, past the Reef and out to open sea. In a moment or two the Flying Scud was swelling out her linen and after them; and not all the interest of the fleet, by any means, centered on the three other racers.

"I have shipped as able seaman, Pepperidge," said Mr. Berkeley. "And as such you must command me."

"I think you'll earn your passage," said Mr. Pepperidge. "It's going to be a wet trip. But if the Flying Scud doesn't show them all a clean pair of heels she'll be in close alongside the winner. There's some money up. Of course, you know, we've got to keep our distance, but we're going to make our time!"

Under no better circumstance could Mr. Lawrence Berkeley have opened more favorably the little campaign he had promised himself; for when he was not occupied doing seaman's duty, he was beside Josephine with a freedom it might have taken weeks of more formal acquaintance to win.

"Well, you like it?" he said, as a wave poured over her, the sun struck it, and she emerged shining in a perfect halo of iridescence.

"The next best thing to being a wave yourself!" she said. And there was something as splendid as the sea and wind and sunshine in the girl's intrepidity. As for Mrs. Pepperidge, she was more at home at sea than on shore; but this girl could hardly have seen the sea a year ago.

The wind freshened. They almost forgot about the other yachts in the delight of their own sailing as, beating up to windward, they mounted and soared like a bubble on the great waves that hammered the bows and broke beneath the keel, as they dipped into green hollows and the crests powdered over them, as they forged on with the lee rail under water and lay flat along the windward rail to trim the boat, and saw the huge wave towering over them, stooping and lifting them in its grasp, and now felt like a straw lost in the power and play of the elements, and now challenged them

with gay defiance; on one side, the sea a waste of weltering gray and white waters, and on the other a stretch of tumbling sapphire and silver—some sense of danger and some pride of daring and overcoming, the tonic of the strong air, and a keen exhilaration, making their spirits rise and race with the boat and the billows. And then they lifted their heads and lost themselves as the three beauties before them swept round the stake-boat, and with the breaking of the thread outswelled the spinnakers in vast opaline clouds that took a rosy tint, sweeping on and up like gigantic mothlike creatures of some other atmosphere dropped on the waters here with widespread wings. And at the instant every valve of every whistle in the boats waiting on their coming sprang open, and a chorus of hoarse and of shrill blasts scattered the air.

“Hark!” cried Josephine.

“Do you hear it?” cried Mrs. Pepperidge. “It is the hunt-music in Tristan!”

“By Jove, so it is!” said Mr. Berkeley, as the wonderful chorus rose and fell and rose again. “And quite on the scale of the occasion. Ah, here we go ourselves!” And rounding the stakeboat in their turn, their own spinnaker caught the wind, and they followed full-breasted as a mighty swan.

“We shall make it,” said Mr. Pepperidge. “This settles it. There’s nothing beats the Flying Scud before the wind!” And they rushed along with the wind blowing rainbows out of the water and the following sea seething and hissing behind them in a vast sweet resonance.

“Oh!” cried Josephine, glittering and streaming with the spray, “I wouldn’t have missed it for a year of my life! The great sea balloon! The

rush of it! The music of the tremendous murmur!"

"You should be a daughter of the Vikings."

"I suppose it isn't a great way from the Viking to the Puritan," said Josephine. "And then I can claim a little of the Dutch, who were born, you know, like the halcyon, in a nest upon the water."

"And while you are looking up your sea people, remember some gold-haired Venetian grandmother or other," said Mr. Berkeley, looking at the bright and dripping braids.

"Does the prow of the gondola strike on the stair?

Do the voices and instruments pause and prepare?

Oh, they faint on the ear as the lamp on the view,

I am passing—*prétré*—but I stay not for you,

Prétré—not for you!"

sang Josephine.

“Perhaps sometime,” he said, with a sudden daring which she knew she had brought upon herself by her song, “I may hear you sing the rest of it.

“I am coming—sciár—and for you and to you,
Sciár—and to you!”

Josephine hesitated, an angry word on her tongue, a thought of Will, and of his right to resent this flashing into her eyes. But she looked directly before her and said nothing. And Mr. Lawrence Berkeley thought he had never seen so radiant a beauty as hers was in the virgin flush of her indignation, the blue of the skies and the seas mirrored in her topaz eyes with a swift green splendor. And then the necessity of putting himself right with her made his heart beat more than any plunging into any hollow of the sea, or swelling of spinnakers,

or unison of steam whistles making Wagnerian music, had done.

“I forgot myself,” he said. “You are enough to make a wiser man do so. And as for you, come,” he said, “you must forgive a moment’s presumption that borrowed some of the freedom of all this freedom of sea and air and camaraderie!”

“How long have you known me, Mr. Berkeley?”

“Forever!” he exclaimed.

“Oh, thank you,” she laughed; “I am not so old.”

“A goddess is neither old nor young.”

“Would you speak this way to a Boston girl on a half-day’s acquaintance?” she asked, and she rose a little, for they were still half-lying along the deck, the wind that was with them meeting the running tide and making a sea whose spray swept them fore and aft.

It was just then that one of the

huge chance seas that wind and tide sometimes roll up between them caught and distracted the helmsman's eye for half an instant. In that instant the boat had broached to, and, although only a second was lost in putting her before the wind again, the helm down, the crew scrambling to trim the ship, and the air lurid with Mr. Pepperidge's vociferations, yet they had seemed to drop down some sinking depth and one of the long, furiously chasing waves had leaped on board, and Josephine's hold loosened and her feet unbraced by her movement, in another moment she would perhaps have washed off with the wave, or, at any rate, have been struck violently against the rail, had not Mr. Berkeley put out an arm and caught and kept her.

"I would speak to her that way," said he.

"And she would say: 'Thanks,' "

she replied with a laugh, readjusting herself.

“Do you mean to pretend you weren’t afraid?” he exclaimed.

“Afraid? Of what? You don’t fear till you lose hold of yourself, and I have never yet felt as if any harm could befall me.”

“By Jove!” said he. “Not all the waters of all the seas can quench the fire in you!”

“Oh!” cried Mrs. Pepperidge, before Josephine, who did not understand or like some things in her new life, and who wondered if the men in it must be either like this or like Mr. Gervais, could express her resentment. “I can’t hear what you are saying, but I don’t see how you can talk at all when it’s getting so exciting, and it’s now or never with the Flying Scud! I am just holding my breath!”

“Keep on holding it,” cried Mr.

Pepperidge, his eyes fixed on a point in the distance. "I wouldn't have you lose it for a farm."

A few moments of silence as they swept on with their mad rush. It seemed to Josephine as if the world were holding its breath, as well as Mrs. Pepperidge. "Oh!" she cried again, presently, "I don't know that I wouldn't give a great deal more than a year of my life to have the Flying Scud come in—"

"When one saves another's life," asked Mr. Berkeley, "has he any rights in it?"

"When he saves it?" said Josephine. "Why, you would save a fly's! And if you hadn't hindered me, one of the crew would—I don't know that Mr. Pepperidge would—would—"

"Have come about with the boat?"

"But he would have tossed me the life-preservers, and there are all the steamers following; and you must

take into account, too, that I can swim,—a little.”

“There they are!” exclaimed Mr. Pepperidge. “Make a note, Pinky!” And a gun boomed, the wind carrying the report in-shore, and only the atmospheric echo reaching them strained and refined away, followed by the tutti of all the whistles and calls in a pandemonium of sound as the winner crossed the lines. “Now, if all holds,” he said, “we shall have made the distance ourselves in but ten seconds less than the winner, in spite of that dashed blunder just now. That means a lot of money, Mrs. Pepperidge.”

“Why didn’t you enter?” asked Mr. Berkeley.

“Because I was acquainted with those ten seconds,” said Mr. Pepperidge. “Beastly bore.” And while he held his stop-watch, they swept on with every inch of canvas

spread, with every rope and bolt strained; and deck wet and mast still feathered from the sea, they crossed the line and had their own ovation. "Part of that's for Miss Josephine," said Mr. Pepperidge.

There was dancing that night on shore in one of the great villas where the tapestried walls and the bowery recesses under the lofty palm-trees made it seem as if the rout of a summer palace had emptied itself into the forest; and as the soft folds of Josephine's misty raiment touched Mr. Berkeley while she swept by, he was conscious of a sudden fullness at his throat, she was so beautiful, so full of life and sweetness, so like the roses she wore, whose fragrance drowned out the breath of all those other flowers, so radiant, flushed with dancing and pleasure; he felt like closing his eyes as if it were too much to see, or would not be the same if he looked the

second time. And then he was angry with himself, he could not have said why.

“ ‘When you do dance, I wish you . . .
A wave of the sea, that you might ever do
Nothing but that,’ ”

he said, when he asked for a dance.

“All in the day’s work,” she replied. “I was wishing I were a wave this morning, you know. But I am sorry that I haven’t a dance left till very late.”

“Let me have that,” he said.

He had thought at first that when the time came for his dance they would wander out and listen to the sea together under this great blotch of a waning moon high in the dark heaven. But now everything was dew-drenched—and, besides, if it were only for once he was going to have this dance, he was going to clasp and hold her for his own, despite herself, a dance’s while. But

our very wishes give us not our wish; and the dance with this now rather silent and distract little girl holding him almost at arm's length, was not at all the dance which he had imagined.

They came out after awhile, and lingered where a rug lay on the grass by a fountain that tossed its jet high in the air with a dreamy, indifferent sway, and where a lemon tree in its tub sweetened the air. The tinkle of the fountain, the patter of the lemon leaves on the rising breeze sounded with an infinite triviality against the long, deep breathing of the sea.

“ ‘The unquiet, bright Atlantic plain,’ ” said Josephine, putting up the cape of white fur he had brought her. The pallid moonlight and the sea-charged air became her, for either they toned down her vivid color or she was tired and the color had fallen, and with her fatigue some-

thing a little more tender than brilliant was in her eyes. "I suppose you'll be tempting it again now?"

"Yes. Mr. Applegate has asked me to tempt it with him to Mount Desert and perhaps Labrador while the Pendragon makes repairs. You go along, of course?"

"No. My aunt takes me now to the country. She needs the rest—she says I do, too."

And Mr. Berkeley had a sudden picture before his eyes of Josephine leaning forward over a balustrade he knew at the Applegate place at Beverley Farms, a trellis above her waving its white York roses in the sunny wind everywhere against blue sky above her and around her, red roses clasped on her breast, while her hair escaped from a white scarf blown off from her head like the scarf of Iris, her color rose and dimpled and deepened, her wide, open eyes reflected the gleams of the

sea, and her smile the intensity of the sunshine; and in view of the vision he resolved on the spot that if he were aboard the Neckan should lower its peak before the flagstaff of Beverley Farms.

Every one was tired on returning to the Neckan, and Josephine was almost alone upon the deck where she lingered. Perhaps it was because she was tired herself that a vague melancholy possessed her, that pleasant melancholy which has no source but languor and a sense of too much sweetness in life. A little uncertainty, too, was in it. She was not sure if one man's love were better than another's; if, after all, things were worth while; if she knew herself and her own wishes. She had neglected to write to Will in these weeks that by sunlight and midnight were burning out life as if in a splendid funeral pyre fed by spices and fragrant oils; but if she

had in any slight measure forgotten him the knowledge of his existence and affection had been something like a subliminal consciousness, and to-night all the tenderness in her heart leaned towards him. She said to herself that she was very weak-minded. The brooding darkness of the heavens, the glimmer over the long swells of the paler sea, the shadow of the low coast, all lent themselves to this gentle melancholy. Occasionally a strain of band music came on the fitful wind, now full of dancing measures, now far and fine as elfin horns. A little remote she divined the great yachts lying like darker darknesses, betrayed only by their colored lights. She wondered if any one there felt doubt or indecision or sadness.

A wonderful hush seemed almost to muffle the soft wash of the waters. Far away was any thought of shipwreck and drowning and the dark

caves of death, but what one might call the atmosphere of such a thought was there. A puff of land breeze came down and brushed by with a remembrance of gardens and flowers and was gone; and from one of the nearer yachts, where some prima donna was entertained, again the music of *Manon* came, as it had done earlier, only it was no longer the cry of joyance, but the sobbing song at the convent gates.

“Is it not my hand that thine own now presses?” sang the singer. “Is it not my voice? Am I not *Manon*?” And Josephine felt that if she abandoned herself a moment longer to the spell, tears would be a luxury.

V

Mrs. Applegate was far too astute a manager at this crisis to let Josephine become in the least degree an old story; and she took her away the next day at the moment that should cause her to be remembered as a beautiful phantom flashing across the vision of the summer world.

They went first to Josephine's mother, who received her with open arms, and surrendered her with misgiving and regret. Her sisters, in spite of Josephine's sweetness, felt somewhat as if in the presence of some foreign visitor, hardly recovering their poise before her departure. It so chanced that Dr. Will Marley was away with a traveling patient; but Mrs. Applegate was quite inno-

cent in that regard, having hardly heard the name of Dr. Will Marley.

Gentle and delightful as she was to them, they all felt a little difference in Josephine, as if she were no longer quite the simple girl who had left them six months before; or else their own imaginations surrounded her with an atmosphere that made her seem remote. It was, however, only with difficulty that Mrs. Applegate carried her point in relation to keeping Josephine with her a while longer, pleading her own poor health and her real loneliness. "You can't conjecture what it is, Maria," she said, "to be a childless old woman. You are really so solitary; and you have no bond upon the future."

"You should have thought of that twenty years ago," said Mrs. Grey, grimly.

"I have grown so fond of Josephine," urged Mrs. Applegate.

“And you have the others. You can’t begin to be selfish, Maria, at this time in your life.”

If Josephine said nothing it was because she hardly knew which way to turn between her diverging inclinations; and then she was a little sore that the unwitting Dr. Will should have chosen this time for his absence. So she went down with her aunt to the Farms; and there Mrs. Applegate gave out that she herself was too ill to see people,—remarkably blooming invalid that she was—and kept Josephine in such rest and quiet as she might till Mr. Applegate’s return, when he took them on a journey to the Pacific coast before returning to town.

Once again in the house in town, Mrs. Applegate felt a keen relish for the work she had laid out for herself; and under Mr. Applegate’s surprising encouragement, and her

own gentle flattery of the society reporters, her entertainments, as Mr. Gervais phrased it, made the town hum. One gayety followed another, and although she knew nothing of it, Josephine's was the name to conjure with. She was engaged long beforehand for every german; she was asked to name her convives at dinner; and to be seen with her was almost enough to make any other girl the fashion too. She did not dress a great deal—one nicer gown, and the rest furbished and made over from her aunt's former toilettes, answered all purposes still; but whether she was going out in the carriage in the white cloth trimmed with sables, or down to dinner in the palest of pale green sea-nymph tulle, or in the white silk covered with old blonde, never with any jewel but her pearls, but always with myriads of roses, she was something distinctly different from the

other girls, and distinctly sweeter than any of them.

The first time that Josephine wore her pretty white cloth suit was at Mrs. Boylston's musicale; for music being much the fashion, that lady was very musical, and a world-known prima donna who had social relations, being in town, had promised to make a couple of her songs the feature of the occasion, which was a matter of great gratulation. Of course, it was impossible for Mrs. Boylston to leave out her father and his family; and entirely unconscious how unwelcome she was, Josephine appeared, and Harry Gardner, and Harry Hereford, and Otis Mason, and Lawrence Berkeley, and Tom Scollay, and the others were in her train at once, as bees appear out of an empty horizon when sweets are exposed.

Mr. Applegate, in his genial mood, had ordered to his daughter's house

some magnificent palms, a blossoming orange, and a white azalea-bush that filled a whole window, with a world of Madame de Waterville roses—those beautiful things blushing all along the edges, but so pure, so white, so more and more delicate at the heart. “They are like you, those roses,” whispered Mr. Lawrence Berkeley. It was Lawrence Berkeley who, the first night she danced with him that winter, had murmured,

“ ‘Pearl-white, you poets liken Palma’s neck,
And yet what spoils an orient like some
speck
Of genuine white turning its own white
gray?’ ”

“Even the dancing-men, half out of breath, talk Browning here,” she told her uncle afterward, to his chuckling delight.

“Lawrence Berkeley is hardly what you might call a dancing-man,”

said her aunt. "He is past his first youth. He has—"

"Had his nights in Egypt," said Mr. Applegate. "When he dances now, some one else pays the piper."

But Josephine had disliked the familiarity of his compliments since she had first received them. It was, she felt, only a somewhat more refined type of the Gervais business. And she moved away now, taking a low seat in a corner, half-hidden by the palms there, to listen to the pianist, who, in a circle of breathless women leaning forward like pale, panting mænads, was tearing the piano to pieces as fast as he could, and to enjoy the rich breath of the flowers and the lovely room; and finding little Bertie Boylston there with his white face and starry eyes, who, after a grave survey of her smiling beauty and her toilette, slipped his little hand in hers and

leaned his pretty head on her shoulder.

It was not so simple, however, escaping Lawrence Berkeley.

"Is it difficult, do you know?" said he, leaning over her, with one hand on the pedestal that held up a bronze, and sure that his voice should make no marked increment to the noise. "You remember what Dr. Johnson said?" Josephine laughed. "It is heresy," he said. "But keep my secret. Why? Oh, there are all sorts of inquisitions, you know."

"There ought to be for those that don't love music," she whispered.

"Well, Liszt played this once to me."

"Liszt!"

"Ah, when one is young one ventures, one exploits the matter, one wants to satisfy one's self, to know the thing at its best!"

"But did Liszt unlock his treasures

to one who wishes they were impossible?"

"Oh, there are golden keys!"

"What did he care for golden keys?"

"All the same, they unlock everything. I am not sure they would not unlock the treasures of the heavens. However, all golden keys are not necessarily connected with the jingling of the guinea." He looked at her horrified face and laughed. "I did not say I didn't love music," he said. "Do you recall the people in Venice when Galuppi plays? 'I can always leave off talking when I hear a master play.' But for my part the voice, the singing voice divine, is the delicious thing—"

"This is delicious to me," she said, drawing Bertie a little closer. "And, if you please, I want to hear it."

But the pianist had done his best, and the violin and piano sonata was

at an end, and the prima donna had not appeared. The violinist played a short Vieuxtemps solo, and the pianist a wonderful Rubenstein "Portrait"; and, with no prima donna yet, the people began to look about them questioningly.

"What's the matter, Frances?" said Mr. Applegate, as his daughter brushed by. "Where's your singer? Any hitch?"

"Oh, I'm half beside myself!" Mrs. Boylston exclaimed. "She hasn't come. I don't know what to make of it! I've sent the carriage for her." And just then a note was put into her fluttering hands. "Oh! oh!" she whispered, her whisper really almost sepulchral. "She isn't coming! The day is so damp and raw she doesn't dare venture. Oh, the treacherous thing! She never meant—"

"Tut, tut! Let her alone. Let her stay and take care of her pre-

cious voice. She's no loss, with Josephine at hand. Josephine can sing her off her feet."

"Oh, father, you don't know! The Van Schermers are here; and it is so mortifying—"

"Pshaw! Just ask Josephine to take her place, I tell you."

"Josephine!" with an infinite contempt.

"Yes, Josephine."

"Oh, you're gone daft over that girl!"

"I overlook your impertinence, Frances, on account of your excitement. Do you suppose I know nothing about music? You haven't heard Josephine. Well, you'll never have a better chance. Here, where is she?"

"But, father! father!" she exclaimed, bewildered, and vainly following him as he moved off. "I can't have any such nonsense. Your little singing country girl—"

"Josephine," Mr. Applegate was saying, "will you sing for Mrs. Boylston? It seems to be rather necessary—"

"Really?" said Josephine, with hesitation; and then rising slowly. "Do you want me to, uncle? Why, yes, certainly, if you will stand beside me." And in spite of Mrs. Boylston with her two outstretched, trembling hands, Mr. Applegate was leading Josephine to the piano. And there was a moment or two of murmuring with the accompanist, and then the voice broke forth, and swelled, and filled the rooms with an unutterable sweetness, and seemed only not to mount to heaven because the place was heaven now, with the blushing face, the shining eyes, the open mouth, the silver voice of an angel.

"The musicale went all to pieces," said Mr. Applegate, afterwards, to his wife, who had not gone.

"They wanted no more fiddling or tinkling, nothing but that singing. And Frances never got so much for so little in her life. I'm glad you didn't go; something would have happened to you. Frances was just in the seventh heaven, if she could be there and groveling with gratitude at the same time. I hope it will last. As for Josephine, when it was all over she was just little Josephine, so used to singing that she didn't know she had done anything extraordinary. I heard one of the Vassall-Royals say it was 'almost—almost too professional, you know.' Vassall-Royal deteriorated that race when he married an idiot. What has become of Josephine's nerves, by-the-way? Didn't I hear you say something about their being all tired out once?"

"Oh, but this is a new set of nerves in use now, you know," his wife replied. "The nerves of

novelty and pleased excitement, and freedom from care, and all that. The old nerves are resting—”

“Well, I hope the new nerves won’t tire, then. Otis Mason is simply beside himself about her, I hear, and he is—yes, he is a noble fellow. And Billy Somerset is *engage*’, too. By Jove! if she sees anything to like in Billy Somerset I shan’t think so well of her! And Lawrence Berkeley has—”

“Ah! Lawrence Berkeley? Yes.”

“—Has asked to see me on some particular business to-night. He’s a man in a thousand. And, by Jove! my dear, with his family and his money—why, his income—his income alone is close on a half-million a year. He could marry a royal princess. Though, to be sure—However, all that’s a great while ago. It’s forgotten long ago. That’s what you’ve done for your niece, Mrs. Applegate!”

Mr. Applegate and Dr. Will Marley were not at all of the same mind as to what had been done for the niece. As Will read Josephine's last letter late that night—one of the letters he had waited for and expected and longed for, coming far less frequently now than in the beginning, covering fewer pages, dwelling more on the gay life than on her love—he had a great sinking at his heart. And driving his lonely way over the hills by the flying moonlight of a dry and wintry gale, he was full of melancholy and foreboding. That aunt and uncle, he felt, must have other plans for Josephine than that she should become the wife of a poor country doctor. Not that he distrusted the faithfulness of his darling, but he distrusted himself; he had so little to offer. And, alas! if Josephine, weighing these things and those things in the balance, found these things wanting!

Poor little Josephine! With all the success that befell her, and the royal progress she was making, in the view of her aunt and uncle, she was in reality hard bested in those days.

"I hope," Mr. Applegate had said to his wife, "that there is no country lover to complicate things now." And although Josephine heard him, she said nothing. All the world at home knew what Will and she were to each other; and she had never thought about it, but had unconsciously taken it for granted that all the world here knew, too. And thus she had received most of the attentions paid her as meaning just the kindly liking and friendship that Rob Campbell's was — poor dear Rob Campbell, working might and main at college, where he had chosen to starve his way through rather than take a lesser chance at learning. But before she could command her blush and speak, if she

had intended to do so, Lawrence Berkeley had been announced, and she was to thank him for the flowers he had sent on some pretext, wonderful white orchids. And then there must be singing. And he was still there when it was time for lunch; and he went out with them to the reception and the tea; and she danced with him at the Devonshire's german; and if she slept the greater part of the next day, he was beside her at Mrs. Dartmouth's dinner; and his seat was next her own at the theater party afterwards; and it was he that wrapped her cloak about her and put her in the carriage with her chaperon, and who came in for five-o'clock tea next day to inquire for her, and was to be found there by the other swains as they arrived—those youths beginning to think that Lawrence Berkeley was something too much in evidence, unless their part in the play was over.

For if there were a private view at a studio, or a rare collection of curios to which scarcely any one had access, it was Lawrence Berkeley that took her there. If there was a more delightful concert than ordinary, the empty chair beside her own was in some mysterious manner always taken by Lawrence Berkeley. It was he, now that Lent had come, who met them just on the church steps, and took her from her aunt for a long walk up the windy avenue under the cold blue sky. It was he who went with her to see the great library before it was opened to the world and explained to her the scheme of the frescoes where the pristine simplicity of art on the first floor led to the graphic interpretation of romance on the next, and, still mounting, to the utmost complexity of decoration and of religion on a flight higher. It was he that she turned to for sympathy in

delight at some phrase of music, with some picture that led your feeling and your fancy into the depths. It was he whose quiet smile told her if she had admired with too much of the newness of youth. It was he who, apropos of everything, had the amusing story, the ready reminiscence; he who, having been the world over, had gleaned something from everywhere that had escaped the eyes of others, who, if he were simply *blase* and commonplace to the rest of the world, seemed to her the most new and original person she had met, acquaintance with him being like a doorway into a life of which she had never dreamed till she came to her aunt's house.

Mrs. Applegate had conquered her prejudices in favor of a chaperon sufficiently to allow Mr. Berkeley to take Josephine out on the Road one bright day with his horse Wotan,

the powerful white creature flashing along in his gold trappings, the embodiment of the force and fury of a wintry gale. Wrapped in the white bear-skins, the bells themselves seeming to flash with sound, cutting the wind as they went, Josephine was so lost in the delight of swiftness that she felt as if she were a spirit fleeing through space. The splendid scene of the long shining road under the blazing blue sky, the lines of sleighs dashing along behind the great hackneys and the thoroughbreds, the rosy faces, the rich furs, the gay greetings, the bells, the cries—it made the country sleigh-ride seem like plodding along on an ox sled. Ah, no! Only for a moment! There was one sleigh-ride she remembered with a sudden thrill; there were many sleigh-rides that it warmed her heart to remember. And then, in the excitement of the dash, she felt in

some nameless way that she had done her duty in remembering; and she abandoned herself to the pleasure of this moment, when it seemed as if the superb teams on either side divided to make way for them, and they were flashing down the road like living light. For half a minute Josephine shrank as though she were being taken for a circus girl; but the next, the strife, the speed, the magnificent moment, overcame her, and she would have left Harry Hereford's Peg behind if the effort had thrown them into the nearest star.

“That was fine,” said Lawrence Berkeley, when they had forsaken the splendors of the Road, and were going more quietly homeward. “It makes a fellow feel immortal, by all that’s good! This horse is Wotan himself, but Pegasus gave him a close call!”

“It is like a dream,” said Josephine. “All the faces, the color, the

motion. I feel as if I had been inside of a bubble."

"It is the most brilliant scene in the world," he said. "It beats the Prado, and that beats Europe. I don't know of a keener excitement, unless it is when on a sledge behind six great black Hungarian horses on a wolf hunt in the mountains over there."

"Oh!" shivered Josephine.

"Yes, there is a tang which gives flavor—the icy air, the loneliness, the vastness. As for the danger, I don't know if it is any more dangerous than our drive to-day."

"To-day!"

"Well, than a tiger hunt in an Indian jungle; not the sort I saw them whip up for the Prince, but the real man-eater whose tooth ripped my arm up to the shoulder once. I had the tooth cut for a seal, though."

"Oh!" shivered Josephine again.

"Come, this is too bad," he laughed.

"It makes my blood run cold."

"More than this blast from the bay? But it wasn't half so blood-curdling as when a fellow on the bank of the Hoogly walked up the sky on a thread he threw before him, and disappeared there. Because I walked up with him, and hung there alone in mid-air, scared out of my wits, till I gently sank to earth again."

"It isn't possible!" she cried.

"No, I don't suppose it was. I suppose the scamp hypnotized me. But it was all the same as possible. And as for possible, who can say what is or what is not? There is no marvel the size of the fact that we are here on this ball swinging in space to-day. For my part, I sometimes doubt that."

"I don't know what you mean!" cried Josephine.

"Here we are at the door," he said. "*I don't* doubt that I have had

as glorious an hour to-day as I ever had in my life!"

"Oh, it was fine!" said Josephine.

And then little Bertie, with his nurse, was waiting for her on the steps, and there was a minute of gay snowballing with the child, and there was the excuse of taking him round to his own door, for a continuation of the hour.

" 'And what if heaven prove that she and I Ride, ride together, forever ride!'"

said Lawrence.

"But that," for the sake of saying something, "was on horseback," said Josephine.

"This is a white horse," said Bertie, seeing his moment to join the conversation. "And it makes music wherever it goes."

"I thought it was the lady who made the music, Bertie," said Lawrence. "This lady does."

"Yes, I guess she does," Bertie

replied, slowly, turning the thought over. "I call her the singing lady. I go to see her, and she sings to me. She sings about 'I have to go to bed by day.' I love her very much."

"Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings!" exclaimed Lawrence.

"Don't you?" said Bertie, gravely.

"Oh, to be a child again! With liberty to speak your mind!" said Lawrence, glancing over at her boldly, and dropping his eyes swiftly.

And then they were at Bertie's door, and Mr. Applegate was just coming out, and Josephine walked home with him.

VI

On the street, or in the house, now, in some way Lawrence Berkeley managed—albeit possibly with some quiet assistance—to be with Josephine almost every one of her waking hours that she was not writing for her uncle—whose determination towards authorship was, he said, something in the air of the place—so that she had no time to think or to remember, except under the force of a sort of magnetism; for he had some magnetism of his own. It was he whose atmosphere was surrounding her and overpowering her, till, suddenly recalling those words of her uncle, she began to see what they meant. They—they meant nothing! She was not a simpleton! As if she could not take care

of herself! She was not going to think at all! The present was sweet, was full, was delightful; by-and-by it would all be so dull, so small, so poor. Will, to be sure—But she was not altogether certain—Would it be Will? Hush, hush! say nothing, think nothing, feel nothing! Only just here, and now, and the things of to-day, were so pleasant!

Yes, they were very pleasant. Her aunt was so happy in her, her uncle was idolizing her, she was receiving tribute from the whole world. No charity concert, no musical event, and no affair of any other kind was complete without her. She, who had pinched along on a little twenty-dollar-a-month school salary, could command the income of a fortune in a church choir if she wished; could possibly command, she had discovered, a fortune itself on the stage, with but little training; but was put beyond all need of anything but

singing for singing's sake by the love and prodigality of those about her. In fact, the presence of this sunbeam in his house had so warmed Mr. Applegate's heart that his habits were revolutionized, and life was a much more serene thing there than it had wont to be. He had not only opened his purse, but he had forgotten to close it, and did not seem to know how to lavish enough just now. Mrs. Boylston and Mrs. Bulfinch might wonder where all this young splendor came from, but they could not be sure; and as, whenever anything very superior was bestowed on Josephine, something very fine was apt to come to one of them, by means of Mrs. Applegate's tact, they kept their suspicions to themselves, and, anxious as they were concerning the future, bided their time in what patience they might.

“Father's fads always occupy him

for a while," said Frances, in the depths of the sisterly council, "and then they go up in smoke."

"I should agree with you if he hadn't married the last one," said Laura.

"I sometimes think," said Frances, "that he might have done worse."

Mrs. Applegate understood the world around her in most directions; but it is not to be wondered at if she thought that perhaps she had builded better than she knew for the child in asking her here, and that if Mr. Applegate should incline eventually to bequeath her a portion of his wealth it would do no harm to Frances and Laura, who already had great abundance, and for whom there would still be abundance left. And if he did not, she might need nothing, should Lawrence Berkeley win.

Nothing was farther from Josephine's thoughts than the gaining

of bequests or the possession of wealth. In her outer consciousness she had come down here again because her aunt had no daughter, because she was to go on regaining her nervous equilibrium by bringing into action powers and sensations and emotions—nerves hitherto unused by her; to please her uncle, moreover; and she was to go back in the spring and marry Will; rather hoping, too, when she first came, that her aunt would feel like giving them the little house with the piazza and bay-window—even sometimes furnishing it in her fancies, but giving that up impatiently some time since—the rooms, she would have said now to herself, had she said anything about them, where you could stand in the middle and touch the four walls! If in her inner consciousness anything else was beginning to shape itself as to the pleasure of this sort of life—of

the yachting and coaching in the summer that she heard about, of the foreign travel of which people spoke casually as of this or that dinner, and a glimpse of which she had had, of moonlight nights in Venice, of a dahabeeyah on the Nile, of all the pleasures that become a man of millions—she was not yet aware of it, or only so vaguely that she was neither startled nor self-reproached. She was having a wonderfully delightful season, drinking this cup of success to its sweet rich lees, and she had even forgotten to write to Will and tell him of it this last two weeks and more. How could she tell him, indeed, that Lawrence Berkeley was such a pleasant fellow; that he was so friendly, so charming, so entirely a man that any unsophisticated girl might fall in love with?—that more than one girl, had Josephine but known it, had fallen in love with, to her sorrow!

She was half-waked from this pleasant, trance-like condition one afternoon at the Symphony, but only half. The soloist had been satisfactory; there had been some catching lighter numbers, full of caprice and melody and witchery, the wildness of a dance of death without the wickedness. Mrs. Applegate had gone to a meeting of the Zenana Flock, expecting to be late, and leaving her seat for any one who might choose to take it. Josephine talked a little with an acquaintance on her right, and then she looked round on the brilliant audience of which she was one, at Beethoven himself there in the bronze, listening with down-bent head and features that seemed but a chord of his own music made not audible, but visible, while she breathed the fragrance of her breast-knot of violets.

The dance music had left her tingling with pleasure; but all at

once she was aware, as one is when awaking in the morning after trouble, memory of which is not yet clear, that her buoyancy had fallen, and there was sorrow somewhere. She smiled at herself then; the symphony had begun, the orchestra played as one soul. Ah, yes, she understood it; there were the three notes that some one had said were the strokes of Fate knocking at the door—and even while she heard them her thoughts reverted to herself, unconscious of the music, but vaguely led by it. Yes, yes, they said, it was a life of splendor, but it was not her life. Those born in it were swept along it as upon an undercurrent, and it was not all a thing of the senses with them; they could live and aspire beyond it. But she—she observed it, pictured it, criticised it, luxuriated in it; presently, it would enwrap her; if she made it her own, she would become

—she would become—oh, misery! all that Gervais was. What made her shudder? Was it a dim blood-poisoning apprehension, a terror of going down into the dust, of developing into a something ignoble, of the evanishment of soul in matter? Was it the sense of abasement? Was it the sudden blare of the brass, the wild Titanic harmony, as if the elements fought together? She was all at once in a strange commotion. Her own paltriness, her abandonment to her senses, the taint in her, were singing and screaming and struggling defiantly together. The cruelty that could break a lover's heart; the earthliness that would be a mildew on his life if she had not left him; the sorrow, the misery, the despair that had played him false—and, oh, what was life worth without him? There were darker depths even than death. Her fan was over her eyes. She did not know that she heard the

music. Some one took the next seat unnoticed. She was on another plane, in another sphere, at bay, and challenging destiny; and she hardly heard the songs of hope in the andante, melting in tears as some pale autumn sunshine melts in rain, before the great purple curtain of cloud in the scherzo was rising, rising, as if from some high hill country of perfect joy beyond, around whose base the clouds of sorrow still lightly drifted. Now the clouds crept higher again and hid the heavenly summits; hope failed, and the basses moaned. Then a wind swept after them—up, up, up on the flutes, and scattered the mists. Hope spread her wings again; assurance came with the clash of kettle-drums, the vast sweep of the violins, the triumph of the march; and higher and higher and farther and farther the great breath went, stripping away all shadow.

The heights shone calm and clear; myriads of gay souls sparkled and were glad with the violins out there in the wide sunlight; tune and color and joy and light and love overran all that bright world beyond the hills, beyond the skies—and she came to herself after what seemed to her a vision of Will driving through the snow, under the blue sky, the wind whistling about him, on his errands of love and mercy—came to herself with a little start, to find Lawrence Berkeley sitting beside her. But as they walked home together, his dissection of the scherzo, and his quick humming for a moment of one of the tunes of the dance music, as they went swiftly up the avenue, made her feel as if she were dancing it with him, and gave another complexion to her thoughts.

They had come home from the opera the next evening—for the opera paid no heed to Lent that year

—and there Josephine had seen Rob Campbell, to whom some one had given a ticket. She knew him, and he knew her, of course, bowing with glad recognition to her across the house. But he seemed as far off as if he were in the antipodes. And that fact, so slight in itself, so weighty in its relation to her home, her past, and her pledged and promised future, had suddenly made her see more strongly than anything else had done, that she was in danger—in danger of being made captive and held in this life, so far from her old life and all she had loved in it. It had made her very grave; she hardly knew why.

Mrs. Applegate, who had sent Josephine under convoy, going herself to a lecture on "The Puritan at the Base of Our Civilization," and coming in with some stir in season for Tannhauser's song in praise of Venus, had now left the room a

moment, and Josephine, going to the pianoforte, was trying over, as she stood, an air that lingered in her memory. The tune did not come quite clearly, and she had sat down to catch it in earnest, and Lawrence Berkeley drew a seat for himself beside her.

"It is strange," she said, "how a tune will haunt some inner sense that cannot express it."

"That is because music belongs to another world," said he; "because it is

'A tone
Of some world far from ours,
Where music and moonlight and feeling are
one.'

I never felt that, though, half so strongly till I heard you sing. There is something so penetrating," he said, leaning his head on his hand as his arm rested on the piano, and looking at her with a strange light in the dark depths of his eyes, "so

touching, in your voice, it seems the voice of music itself. You must have loved music always."

"Always," said Josephine, briefly, still trying to find the air.

"How I should like to take you where you could hear the Venetian gondoliers as they sing in their soft, melodious dialect! Do you know—may I say—that if there were a heaven—yes, there must be for such as you—my idea of its supremest bliss is something the same as if I were to hear you sing forever—were to have your voice beside me whenever I turn to it! For, speaking or singing, there is no such music for my ear—Josephine!"

He was bending towards her, gazing full in her eyes with his own, his lips near hers, his arms ready to gather her in. Was she listening, as she sat there, silent now, her head bent? In the dim light, through which a statue gleamed, a mirror

glanced, a painting gathered color into itself and hinted of its unrevealed beauty, in the luxurious warmth and the perfume of the bedded roses near, was she yielding—swaying towards him?

Who can say? For at that moment there came a peal of the door-bell that startled the echoes from one end to the other of the great house, and Mr. Boylston hurried in, half breathless, the moment the door was opened.

“Josephine!” he gasped in the hall. “I want Josephine! Where is she? Bertie—little Bertie wants her. She must come—he is crying for her—he is very—ill!”

“Bertie!”

“Bertie. The doctor said to-day he must be denied nothing. Frances is in hysterics. I don’t know if—if he will get well. Can’t you come, Josephine? The little fellow took such a fancy to you—talks of you—

came round so to see you, you know—and he keeps saying, 'The lady that sings, the lady that sings.' We can hardly make it out—his voice is so thick and weak—but that is what it is. Is this your cloak? I have a cab—the horses were put up. I—"

"Of course. Why, of course," cried Josephine, the instant she understood him, and pulling up her cloak. "I won't keep you a minute. I'm so glad if the dear little fellow wants me and I can go! I'm so used to children, you know. Good-night, Mr. Berkeley. You'll tell my aunt about it, please." And before Lawrence Berkeley could remonstrate, or Mrs. Applegate knew what was happening, Josephine was in the cab and driving to comfort the sick child.

Frances Boylston forgot all her jealousies and dreads when she saw the girl come in, radiant in the rose-

color and swan's-down of her cloak, the frosty freshness in her cheek, the splendor in her eyes. She waited only for the out-door chill to pass, and then led Josephine upstairs, not even pausing to think if the physicians, who had said that skill could do no more, would have allowed her to go.

"Here she is, my darling boy," the mother whispered, as they went into the room that seemed to be dark with the steam and odor of drugs, before the nurse turned up the light a moment.

"The lady that sings," muttered the boy, with a thick, strange utterance, but with a glow on his glad white face, surveying the beautiful apparition, and trying to hold out his feeble little hand. "Now sing!" And Josephine sat down beside him and began to sing:

"Soft fall the feet of the little Christ Child,
Walking abroad when the winds are wild;
Dropping his blessing on each dear head

Where the children sleep in their snowy bed;
Shining clear in the moon's white beam,
Where the children sleep, where the children dream."

As she sang, the hot eyelids drooped, but as she ceased they sprang open again, and she began another strain. Cradle-songs, lullabies, hymns, she sang softly, sweetly, untiringly, for an hour. The child lifted his arms to her to be taken, his mother sometimes kneeling on the other side, sometimes distractedly walking the room from end to end. Occasionally he slept, and then she rested as she could in the drowsy atmosphere of the dim place. A whistle from a rushing train far out in the night awoke him, and she began again. The carriages rolling home from late pleasures—how foreign they seemed! How little part such things had in the real things of life! She

had a feeling that if Will were only here this child might live. She was tired, holding the child in a constrained attitude and singing. But what of that? she had danced to more fatigue many a night that winter. When he opened his eyes again she began to sing once more; and when he closed them her voice lulled away, still murmuring with music half under the breath; and Mr. Boylston drowsed on the lounge, and the nurse moved gently here and there, and the mother still knelt beside Josephine and the boy.

The gray dawn was coming in, and she was singing,

“ I think, when I read that sweet story of old,
When Jesus was here among men,
How he called little children as lambs to
his fold,
I should like to have been with them
then,”

when the child looked up with quite clear eyes a moment.

"Mamma," he murmured. They could just make it out.

"Oh, what—what is it, my darling?" the mother cried.

"Is she one of them—one of the angels singing there?" And then, with his eyes wide open on the angels singing there, the child was dead.

Josephine went home and to bed, Mrs. Bulfinch coming to comfort her sister. Wrought to the last point of tension by the night, with its fatigues and sorrows, Josephine slept heavily; and her head ached too much the next evening when she awoke to let her rise, and she was too shocked and pained to wish to rise.

The dear little boy, the only one among all the outside members of the family who had given her affection! She cried till her head ached again while thinking of him. And then death had come so suddenly, so darkly, in the midst of all the splendid movement and gayety—for

Lent had made little difference other than that of changing the character of the gayety—and a song she knew kept running through her head—

“Dust and ashes, dead and done with,
Venice spent what Venice earned!
The soul, doubtless, is immortal—where a
soul can be discerned.”

Venice, indeed! She had all she wanted of this sort of Venice. Her little home in the hills seemed a place to be longed for, a nest of innocence and safety now.

Her devotion to the little dead boy was known all over town by the time of the funeral. Every one left cards, every one sent flowers to her; there were never seen any such as Lawrence Berkeley sent. She received no one; she sent down no messages; and Lawrence Berkeley cursed the fate that had snatched from his lips the draught full of all the sweetness of life. Her uncle, who had felt

very sore over the death of his little grandson—Laura's children were all girls—was now full of anxiety about Josephine, who lay in a singular state of weakness, sick all over and all through, caring for nothing, now and then a big tear welling under her closed lids, languid, listless, wrapt in melancholy thought.

For Josephine was very unhappy. A flash of lightning had illuminated the dark recesses of her being; she saw herself forsaking all that had been her life—her poor careworn mother, her home, and everything it meant—simply for the love of pleasure. She saw herself on the point of treachery to Will, Will who was her very life, her self! If she had not been called away at the instant, she might have done all this. She had! And she was only now repenting it! She felt as if the little child had died to save her. She felt as if she were responsible for that, guilty

of it. She felt powerless, restless, feverish, choked, dying. She looked so. You would hardly have known it was Josephine. And her uncle presently brought in his own doctor, quite another man from Mrs. Boylston's physician; and he, in a fine rage, asked why he had not been called before to a patient in this advanced stage of disease. And then Mr. Applegate made some very strong remarks about Frances, to repent of them as quickly. Josephine had not known before exactly what had ailed little Bertie. "Oh, Will, Will!" she moaned. "You must send for him. He knows all about it—he is a doctor—he can cure me—no one else can. Will, my dear Will—I must have him here."

Her aunt, full of anxiety, full of fear, full of solicitude, probed her with questioning, and then all the burden escaped. And Mr. Applegate, wild with anger and wild with

fright together, had telegraphed for Will, and there Will was in Josephine's room now.

"Frances is a wicked woman," roared Mr. Applegate, waiting below, "to have risked this girl's life so! If she dies—"

"Oh, she will not, she cannot die!" exclaimed his wife, in a transport of apprehension herself, vainly trying to dismiss it. And then they waited for the reassuring word. Mr. Applegate came over and stroked his wife's hair caressingly. "She made us love her very much, didn't she?" he said. And he strode away again, angry with his wife's sobs and his own thoughts. "Why am I upset in this way about a child I had never seen a year ago? Why should I be concerned as to whether she lives or dies?" stormed Mr. Applegate, downstairs. "She is not going to die," calmly said Will, upstairs.

"I'm not afraid of it. I've been exposed to it. I will go in, sir," exclaimed Mr. Applegate, five minutes afterwards, at the door of the anteroom to the sick-chamber.

"I cannot allow you to go in," said Dr. Will. And for once in his life the elder gentleman found his master.

But calm as Will was without, his heart was beating like a trip-hammer within, and every nerve was bristling with electric force. He was dealing with a tremendous enemy; an enemy that assaulted with sapping and mining and draining of strength, with poisoning the blood and the brain. But he had met the enemy countless times before up among the hills; he had the benefit of old Dr. Madden's experience behind him; he was young and fresh in his wrestle with evil; he had the last word of science himself; he knew how to work. He

gave himself no sleep; he summoned every force he had; he allowed no one in the room but the nurses and Dr. Fleischmann, and he never paused to think if he were laboring in this costly disregard of strength to save his treasure for another—for that pale, dark fellow haunting the door; he merely meant to save her. And he did.

It was not till Josephine was entirely out of danger, and removed into another room, and a thorough fumigation had been completed, that Mr. Applegate was allowed to have his way, so overjoyed then as to forget all the hard things he had said about having the doors in his own house shut in his face.

“Now,” said Dr. Will, who in the last weeks had gone and come, “I resign my patient to you, sir, and to Dr. Fleischmann. I have patients at home waiting for me, and must take the night train up, not to return.”

“Will,” whispered a feeble voice from the lounge where Josephine lay, a pallid, big-eyed, little wreck of Josephine, “I must go, too.”

“Not to-day,” said Will, gently.

“Then you must stay till I can go. Oh, Will, you act as if you had not forgiven me! You have acted so ever since you came. It made me cold—it made me shiver to see you. I felt I couldn’t get well. I didn’t care if I didn’t get well. Have I grown so horrid—do you suppose—oh, let me see!”

“Hush, dear; hush!” said Will.

“No, no,” she murmured, huskily. “I must know now! If you came to cure me,” with a sort of eager breathlessness, “just as you would go to cure any one—if you are going away because you think I—I—that I was going to be untrue—or because I have lost all my pretty face—”

“But this is childish, Josephine,

dear one, and I have asked you not to excite yourself."

"Oh, but you know the pretty face will come back—even if I never have my voice again! But if you have left off loving me, Will—" sighed the piteous little tones.

"Hush! hush, my darling! you haven't any strength to waste. I have never left off loving you."

"But you have left off having any faith in me! You—"

"Dearest," he said, in an undertone, "you forget—"

"Oh, I had just as lief Uncle Applegate heard every word I said! He loves me, at any rate, I know. I am willing he should know every thought I think. He believes in me!"

"Josephine, my darling," he whispered, "if you had given your promise to a prince of the reigning family himself, I should have known your heart was mine, and should

have come down and claimed my own. Are you satisfied now?" And he laughed like the old Will.

"Oh, no," said Josephine, gazing up at him with her great hollow eyes, darker now than darkest cairngorm. "I am afraid you say it only to keep me quiet."

"Very well, then," said Will. "Only keep quiet."

And then he knelt beside her, and plainer than any wordy protest could have done, the kiss he gave her told whether or not he loved her.

And, as you may suppose, during these moments, Mr. Applegate was very uneasy. "Do you mean," he cried now—"do you mean, sir, that just as her aunt and I have become attached to her, have found her indispensable, you are going to take her away?"

"I have been attached to her," said Will, "ever since I have known her."

"But I had other views for her, sir—other views! Views very much to her advantage. I must insist upon my rights! Yes, I may call them my rights!" exclaimed Uncle Applegate, beginning to storm up and down the room.

"I suppose, Mr. Applegate," said Will, "that what we both desire is her happiness—"

"Oh, and you mustn't think me ungrateful," piped up the feeble voice. "I love you, too. But Will is my own self—he always was—and I thought you knew—I mean, I didn't think—"

"This will never do," said Mr. Applegate. "I can't have her disturbed in this way. You must go now—I beg your pardon—I really—But if you are going, you see yourself that you had best go now, at any rate."

"Then I must go, too," she urged.

"By Jove!" then cried Mr. Applegate, with the sudden shift tempestuous forces are apt to make. "He shan't go at all. He shall stay here. He shall come here and practice. It's high time of day if we can't have confidence in our little girl's choice. He shall come here and practice—there's plenty of room at the top. What do you say to that, Mrs. Applegate?" For his wife had been detained downstairs, and was just coming into the room with some Easter lilies in her hand. "A fellow that can start in on equal terms with Fleischmann, can beat him on his own ground, is pretty sure of success. Besides, I like his pluck, his grit—got a regular bulldog grip—won't give up our little Josephine. Jove! I don't blame him. Come, young man, sell out your practice to some other young sawbones up there in the wilderness. No more driving over quagmires

and across rivers in the snow-storms and the midnights. I know what a country doctor's life is. We'll give you a *clientèle* that goes off to its country-seats every summer, and leaves you four months for play, for study, for Europe, for the land's-end—”

“Oh, my dear, my dear!” cried Mrs. Applegate.

“Yes,” said her husband, walking up and down the room, and pervading it after his wont, “this house is quite large enough for all our purposes put together. Why, it is an immense house, you know! I always wondered what we wanted such a house for. Now I see! The reception-room on the right for you, the room behind it for your office—the little writing room off that—we no more need those rooms, Mrs. Applegate,” turning to his wife, “than we do the fifth wheel of a coach! And—”

"But my mother! My poor dear mother!" whispered Josephine.

"You can go to see her whenever you wish," said her uncle, with the solemnity of one making a vow, "oftener, very like, than if you lived in the same town with her. She can come down and see you—make a change for her—go to the theater. That little Agnes you tell of can go on with your school you've had so much to say about, or we can do better for her. She can marry that young sawbones—By Jove! perhaps it will be that fellow with the scholarship over here. Oh, I've had my eyes out all the time, Missy."

"And have my little house with the bay-window," cried Mrs. Applegate.

"And so we will make one family here," said her husband. "That is settled."

"I—I couldn't think of it," stammered Dr. Will.

"Why can't you think of it? You've got to think of it! That's all there is about it!" exclaimed Mr. Applegate. "It's done! It's the only condition on which I withdraw my opposition. I'll take Josephine and my wife and go off to parts where I'll defy you to find me, and never come back, if you don't agree, and agree at once! You run up now, my boy," said Uncle Applegate, going over and laying his hands on Will's shoulders, "and put things there in train. You must think of other people than yourself—you really must. You must think of us, two lonely old persons in our empty house. Come down—Where is an almanac?—a calendar—they're usually tumbling round under your feet all over the house when you don't want them! Oh, here—well, let me see—this is—how—ha—come down say just before Whitsunday to stay. I'll have Josephine all well and

strong and rosy again by that time, and I'll have a brass plate engraved for your side of the door, and you'll do well here—you'll do well!" dropping his calendar, and walking up and down again, and rumpling his hair. "I'm entirely selfish in this business," he said. "I'm putting you under no obligation. On the other hand, you're obliging me. I've had a happiness, your aunt has had a happiness, come into our life that we are not going to lose out of it."

"But, my dear sir, my kind—"

"Oh, nothing of the sort! Quite the contrary! Just give me your assurance!"

"But," said Will, with his eyes on Josephine, "if I—if we—accept your goodness, still Josephine should be married at home, and—"

"This is her home!" roared Mr. Applegate. "By Jove! this is her home, and is always going to be. I

shall run no risk of having her leave it under any sort of promise."

"He—he means he can't trust me," sighed Josephine.

"Take it any way you please. Only do as I say. I don't believe any young man from the country ever had a better chance offered him. But of that I will never speak again."

"Oh, Will, Will—"

"Yes, I know," continued Mr. Applegate. "To do the proper thing you should repent your flirtations, and abjure society and money and luxury and gayety and your aunt and me, and go back to the small house and the narrow way. But you are going to do nothing of the kind. Rich people have some rights. I've a right to a sunny old age, as sunny as the gout will suffer it to be—since I've found the way to have it. And have it I will! And you don't go out of this house, Dr.

Will Marley, till I have your word, and there's an end of it." And then Mr. Applegate crossed the room again, and took Will's hands in his. "I want you to understand," he said, "that you're my son. And I think I shall have more satisfaction out of you than I have out of my other children's husbands. And I promise you, we won't be very much in the way, your aunt and I." And with a burst of emotion he threw an arm round Will, and then he kissed him, Will blushing like a girl the while. "Besides," said Mr. Applegate, "it's very handy to have a doctor in the house."

"But Frances!" said Mrs. Applegate.

"And Laura—" said Josephine.

"Laura thinks whatever Frances thinks, you know," said their father. "And Frances feels as if Josephine were very near her child—the dear little boy! And she is as full of grati-

tude, as—well, as Frances can be. She has been round here to inquire every day, you know, and she has even said that if Dr. Will had had the case he might have saved the boy. I don't think so, though—I don't think so. Bertie didn't belong to the earth. And—and Frances is an Applegate, after all. I shouldn't wonder if it ended by your having an affectionate sister in her. It isn't as if there were not enough and to spare for all! And if you can think of a pleasanter way to spend the honey-moon, or any other moon, than by sailing in a yacht through the Mediterranean waters, along the shores of Africa, in summer seas and under summer skies, touching strange Italian cities and exploring Grecian ruins, old temples and palaces, between-whiles, orange boughs heaped on the deck—your aunt and me along—why, I should like to have you mention

it. For that's what we're going to do."

And then, as, a little while afterwards, Mr. Applegate left the lovers together and stamped downstairs, he said to his wife on the way: "It's the luckiest day's work we've done for a long time. If she had married Berkeley, he'd have taken her away; and now we have her for good and all. And I'll be hanged if my millions aren't as good as Berkeley's are, by Jove!"

"My dear, what has that to do with it?"

"A great deal, you will find," said Uncle Applegate. "And the more I think of it, the more I am sure that a fresh, courageous, noble, healthy young chap, like this Dr. Will of ours, is better worth bringing into the family than a fellow with —well, with a history. I never did want our little pink pearl of a girl to marry Lawrence Berkeley, anyway!"

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